

HASCHISCH

A NOVEL

BY

THOROLD KING,

pseud. of

CH. GATCHELL, M. D.,

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & COMPANY
1886

R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS,
PRINTERS.

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HASCHISCH.

CHAPTER I.

HELENE.

HAD Mrs. Hardy been told that she would some day adopt a daughter, she would have received the suggestion with a smile of incredulity, if with no stronger expression of unbelief. Her skepticism, moreover, would have been prophetic, had not circumstances combined to bring about the very thing which she considered such a remote possibility.

It happened in this wise: In her younger days — when her name was still Louise Belmont — she was sent by her parents to a school not far from New York. There she had, as room-mate, a girl whose home in the city was almost in sight of her own, and yet who, after the fashion of metropolitan life, had been, until that time, unknown to her. These two formed for each other a warm friendship, which continued

long after their return to their city homes, and after marriage had, in a measure, separated their lives.

This school-girl friend, having acted as Mrs. Hardy's bridesmaid, several years later herself became a bride and the mistress of a happy home, which, however, she was not destined long to bless. In the third year of her married life a daughter came to her mother-arms, and when the child was almost six years old, by a series of calamities which crashed upon each other in quick succession, first father, then home, and finally mother, were lost to the little one, and she was left a homeless orphan.

The sympathy which had been with the mother through all her trials now went out to the child, and it was arranged that Helene should come to Mrs. Hardy and remain at her husband's hotel, where the family resided, until relatives living in the far west should take her to their own fireside.

Thus week after week passed, and the child, growing fonder of her temporary home, began to live in dread of the summons which should remove her from it; but, as the weeks lengthened into months, the dread of change gave

place to a feeling of vague uncertainty, lest, should her friends fail to come for her, she might be left altogether homeless. This feeling, however, was carefully hidden in the little breast, and was fast merging into a sense of childish despondency, when chance, accident — call it what you will — revealed it, one day, to Mrs. Hardy.

Helene had been playing with other children in the house, but had quietly withdrawn, and for a time stood watching them as, by the side of their mothers, they reveled in their games. Suddenly she turned and ran down the long hall-way to Mrs. Hardy's room. There she found her. Rushing to her side and holding up her little hands in earnest appeal, she cried with trembling voice:

"All the little girls have mammas but me! Won't you be my mamma?"

Instantly Mrs. Hardy caught the child to her arms and covered her face with tears and kisses, exclaiming:

"Yes, my darling, you shall never want a mother while I live!"

Touched to the heart, the little one nestled more closely to her breast, and sobbed until she slept.

The twilight deepened into darkness, and still holding the sleeping child, Mrs. Hardy sat in the quiet room, now faintly illumined by the checkered light which the street-lamps threw upon the high ceiling, until her husband entered. It required but a short consultation on their part to decide that the impulsive promise so given should be fulfilled in fact.

The distant relatives readily relinquished all claim to the child they had never seen, and thus Helene's temporary abode became her permanent home.

It was now twelve years since this decision had been made, and in all that time Mrs. Hardy had never regretted her act.

It was early decided that Helene should retain her own family name; and, as further act of loyalty to her dead friend, Mrs. Hardy took pains, as anniversaries returned, that the child's memory of her mother should be kept fresh. Advantage was taken, also, of the saving of a remnant from her father's shattered estate — a mere trifle though it was — to encourage in her a spirit of independence and self-reliance.

Thus Helene grew to girlhood. In person,

although she was not beautiful, yet she was very handsome. Her eyes were large and expressive, her complexion fair, with the tint of the rose in her cheeks; and her blonde hair fell unconfined in half-careless waves to her neck. Even when young she carried herself with a grace which denoted a spirit far more mature than her years, while her voice had in it a tender undertone, which revealed a nature deeply sympathetic.

But the chance which had given Helene a new home, and made her the recipient of every favor which wealth can bestow, was destined to weave into her life certain elements of misfortune which almost made of it a tragedy.

CHAPTER II.

"THE BELMONT."

THE hotel which had thus early become Helene's home was not one of those busy houses so numerous down-town in the neighborhood of the Squares, where a moving mass of people take up their daily changing residence, but a quiet family hotel on one of those streets with a numerical name which cross the city a little below the reservoir. When he laid its foundations Mr. Hardy had decided to give to the house the name which his wife bore before she assumed his own, and hence the letters cut in stone over its principal doorway announce to all who pass beneath that they are about to enter "The Belmont."

The building itself is of substantial brick. From the iron balconies which cling to its walls a glance to the eastward affords a view into Fifth Avenue, with its moving procession of white 'busses and black carriages. To the

westward one's eye travels across busy Broadway, over the stilted track whose airy trains go flashing by, over ships and over water, to the distant Jersey shore with its high banks of inviting green.

Mr. Hardy belonged to an old New York family, whose name at one time had many representatives, but, by a strange fatality, daughter after daughter was born to it when prayers went up for sons. But one of these prayers received answer, and thus it was that the owner of "The Belmont" became in time the sole surviving male member of the line.

The chief desire of Mr. Hardy's life had long been to revive the family name — so near extinction in himself — and to place it on such a basis that it would stand in little danger of suffering final decay. In this ambition fortune so far favored him as to bless his union with two sons, both of whom gave promise of doing honor to their long line of ancestors.

Austin, the elder of these, in early manhood showed such aptitude for business that he was sent, by the house in whose employ he had spent several years, to represent important interests which their growing trade demanded

in a South African port. But the same business tact and spirit of enterprise which had gained for him the confidence of his employers, soon deprived them of his services. After he had been at his new station one year, he made a fortunate investment which resulted in his acquiring a third interest in one of the richest of African diamond mines. Of this mine he assumed the superintendence, and thus his field of labor was early transferred from the counting-house at Cape Town to the management of important interests in the interior.

Kenneth, the younger, was more inclined to study than to commercial pursuits. But a certain delicacy of constitution soon making it apparent that whatever calling he followed must be of a nature which should offer him an active life, he adopted the profession of civil engineering. In order that a successful pursuit of his studies might be conjoined with a change of climate, which his health seemed to demand, he was sent to Paris for a three years' course at *L'Ecole Centrale.*

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy would have felt very keenly the absence of their sons but for the presence of Helene, who, realizing the pecu-

liarity of her position, gave to her foster parents all of a daughter's love, with even more than a daughter's devotion, while she, in turn, received from them every consideration which their own children enjoyed.

The two boys, on their part, had shown Helene greater partiality than brothers are accustomed to bestow upon their sisters. But, shortly after her advent into the family, the demands of school had called them from home, and thereafter it was only at holiday times that brief visits permitted their generous rivalry in her affections.

From the day when, as a child, she had entered her new home, her position had secured to her all the privileges of an only daughter. But, some two years prior to the events of our story, she had gladly shared her place with a new-comer who had a similar claim upon the family affections.

Mr. Hardy, at this time, had been appointed the legal guardian of his youngest sister's orphaned child — a daughter of one of those numerous daughters whose continued coming had so long threatened the extinction of the Hardy name. Thus Dora Macy came to make

her home in her guardian's family, until she should herself assume control of the property to be held in trust during the term of her minority.

Between Helene Evarts and Dora Macy there was soon formed one of those intimacies that make up so large a part of young girlhood.

But at the time when our story takes up the thread of this family history, a great change and a deep sorrow had come to the little household at "The Belmont."

Helene was now nineteen. Austin was still in far-off Africa. Kenneth, in the previous spring, had returned from his three years' residence in Paris. The summer had come, and had brought with it a dread disease which, the year before, had burst its Indian barriers and pursued its silent march over Europe. After resting awhile on the shores of the Mediterranean, it crossed the Atlantic and spread its black pall over the American metropolis.

Mr. Hardy, on the eve of his preparations to seek a safe retreat in the mountains for himself and his family, fell one of its first victims.

The ever unwelcome visitor that touched him with its skeleton finger never left hearts

more sorely tried than those which mourned his loss. Kenneth was almost inconsolable in his sorrow, and words are useless to tell the grief which the widow hugged to her heart.

After all the offices incident to their sad loss had been performed, the family left the city for the mountain retreat whose cool air and inviting shade the father had hoped to enjoy with them. There the early days of their mourning were passed.

As summer faded into autumn, the first frosts drove to the southward the terrible scourge which the hot and sultry months had fostered, and the city began to fill with hordes of returning fugitives.

The rumble of heavily-laden carts in the streets succeeded the sound of toiling hearses dragged by tired horses. Crapes disappeared from door-knobs, and drawn blinds were again thrown open to admit the sun. Even the places of amusement opened wide their doors, and crowds of merry people passed their brilliant portals, smiling and chatting as though death were but a fiction and life a holiday.

Thus the memories of the dead were left to be worn in the hearts of those who suffered.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER FIVE YEARS.

It was early in November. "The Belmont" had its full quota of guests, and its inmates had settled down to their old-time routine. One evening, shortly before dusk, a servant-maid entered one of its handsomely-furnished apartments, ushering in a gentleman with the words:

"This way, if you please, sir. What name shall I give, sir?"

"You may deliver this," said he, extending toward her a card.

But, instead of depositing the card on the silver tray which the girl held toward him, he quickly returned it to his pocket, and added: "No, stop a moment! Tell your mistress that a gentleman whom she has long been expecting, wishes to see her. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied the girl, as she departed on her errand.

Quickly turning, the young man's glance swept the room, and paused only when it lighted on a portrait of Mr. Hardy, which hung above the mantel. Stepping before it, he regarded it long and earnestly. He stood erect, his hands clasped before him, with fingers tightly interlocked, while their occasionally increased pressure, accompanied by a long-drawn sigh, gave evidence that he was stirred by deep emotion.

He was a little above medium height, with a fully-rounded, muscular form. The lower part of his face was hidden by a full beard, and even his lips were shut from view by a heavy, over-hanging mustache. His head was set on broad shoulders, and his deep chest indicated robust health, the possession of which his swarthy complexion helped to confirm.

For several minutes he stood before the picture; then, with a sigh, he left it, crossed to a window and looked out. Suddenly, on hearing approaching footsteps, he turned and glanced toward the door.

At this moment a young girl entered, clad in hat and ulster, having evidently come from the street. A roll of music which she carried

in her hand she tossed lightly upon a sofa. Humming softly to herself, she proceeded to draw off her gloves, when, glancing up, she discovered that she was not alone.

"O, pardon me! I was not aware a stranger was present!" she exclaimed, and turned to withdraw.

"Helene! Don't you remember me?" cried the other, advancing toward her.

The girl drew back, and for an instant gazed at him intently; then, rushing to him, in her surprise she could scarcely articulate.

"O, Austin, is it you? I am so glad! We have all been longing for you — it was so hard with you away! And — and —" but her voice broke with emotion, and she could say no more.

For a moment Austin himself was silent, and his own eyes filled with tears. But soon regaining his composure sufficiently to speak, he said tenderly:

"I know, dear, how hard it must have been, and I have so longed to be with you — with you all. And my poor mother, how is she? How does she bear it?"

"O, better than we dared hope, at one time. And she, too, is so longing to see you! But

we did not expect you to-day — if we had, we should certainly have been at the boat."

"Yes, I know you would! But that is my fault — I made an earlier start — I was so anxious to reach home! Will mother be here soon, do you think?"

"Yes, but all the sooner if she knows it is you! I will go and find her at once."

"But I have already sent a message by the maid."

"O, she will never find her! Let me go — I shall not be long."

"But you will return too?"

"Yes, presently, after mother has had a short visit with you."

And so saying, Helene turned to leave the room. As she did so, a figure appeared in the door-way through which she was about to make her exit. It was that of a man of about Austin's age, but as unlike him as it was possible for another to be. He was slightly taller, but his thin and spare-built frame gave him the appearance of greater height than he really possessed. His eyes were small, piercing and restless — of no determinate color, but, chameleon-like, appeared to change in different lights. They were

surmounted by a pair of heavy eye-brows which the flexibility of his features permitted him to draw down so as almost to hide his eyes from view, or to raise high on his forehead. The former position was the one which they habitually assumed. His temples were hollow, his cheek-bones high, his nose narrow, and his chin sharp. He was clean-shaven, with the exception of a narrow line of mustache whose tightly-twisted ends showed the action of nervous fingers. His lips defined a mouth which would have been his only redeeming feature had it not been wanting in that breadth which goes with a generous nature.

As the stranger displayed no disposition to retire when his presence was observed, Helene, half-turning, said:

"Mr. Hardy will doubtless be pleased to meet one who comes from the same part of the world which has so long been his home. Mr. Hardy, this is Mr. Arnold, of Cape Town," she concluded, as she quickly left the room.

The person who was introduced under this name, advanced with a tread which was like that of the panther tribe — the ball of the foot was first extended in an exploratory manner, as

though searching for a convenient spot upon which to plant itself. This found, the heel was then permitted to touch the ground, and the weight of the body was slowly shifted from the foot in the rear to the one newly-planted, with an air of security which the previous deliberation seemed to justify.

Austin, who was about to extend his hand, on hearing the stranger's name pronounced, started back in surprise.

"What! Philip Arnold of Cape Town?" he exclaimed.

The other now showed as great astonishment as Austin displayed, and he, too, involuntarily started back.

"You have the advantage of me, sir!" said he.

"I knew that you were somewhere in this part of the world," continued Austin, as though the other had not spoken, "but I never expected to find you under this roof!"

"May I ask, sir, why you take such a lively interest in my whereabouts?"

Now for the first time seeming to talk to Arnold, and not to apostrophize, Austin spoke in more direct and lower tones.

"I do so because I have a mission to perform."

"I know of no reason why I should be interested in your missions, sir."

"Possibly; but there is reason for my taking an interest in yours."

"A matter which gives me little concern."

"Philip Arnold," said Austin, earnestly, "it is useless for us to spar in empty words. We shall soon be interrupted, and this interview must terminate, but I desire that it shall be resumed at the earliest possible moment."

"An honor which I must beg leave to decline until I am informed of its necessity," said Arnold, with an appearance of indifference which was only belied by a nervous twitching of his long fingers.

"You can quickly hear all that I have to say," said Austin, speaking rapidly and incisively. "Listen! One year ago, in South Africa, Horace Crane, formerly of this city, died and left an only child — a little girl of six years. You, as his legal adviser and his trusted friend, administered his estate, which, in passing through your hands, in some way dwindled to an insignificant sum, and his child

was left almost penniless. A small amount of real-estate which he had in this country you are here to administer, but valuable securities which he was supposed to possess, disappeared at the time of his death. Search for these papers has been unavailing, and was long ago abandoned."

During this rapid recital Arnold stood almost transfixed. What emotion he may have felt was carefully concealed; even his fingers had stopped their nervous twitching, for their ends were now tightly pressed into his palms. When he again spoke, it was in a voice which showed that its owner had taken many lessons in the art of self-control.

"And how does that concern me?"

"Those securities are still in existence."

"If you know that, why do you not produce them?"

"Because there is but one man in the world who knows where they are secreted —"

"And that man —"

"Is yourself!"

"It is false!" hissed Arnold, now for the first time permitting his agitation to come to the surface.

"That it is not false, I am prepared to convince you."

"But I decline to hold any further intercourse with you, sir," said Arnold, drawing toward the door.

"Hark!" exclaimed Austin, advancing a step. "Someone comes. You must go, but I desire you to meet me in this room again to-night, after all others have retired. I shall be here; you may do as you think best."

With gliding step the one passed out at the open door, while the other turned, crossed the room, and again gazed out of the window upon the street below.

CHAPTER IV.

A MAN OF ACTION.

Austin Hardy belonged to the world of action. He had made some failures in the course of his life, but they were few compared to the number and magnitude of his successes. Though still young, yet the opportunity which a new country affords had enabled him to accomplish more than most men do, even after long lives of toil. Although to others his actions might at times appear to be hasty, yet every undertaking was preceded by a period of calm deliberation. But, once having determined upon a course, he then pursued it with a directness of purpose which commanded success in spite of all obstacles which might oppose. He was fearless, courageous, and once convinced that he was right, accomplished his object by direct force where others might resort to diplomacy — a word of whose meaning he was ignorant. He never used a bent pin

when there were a dozen straight ones in the cushion.

This was his method in business, and it was his method in all other relations of life. He hated wrong, and would fight for the right, if he had it to do, according to this same principle of action.

Austin had stood at the window but a few moments when the servant who first ushered him appeared at the door.

"Mrs. Hardy is here, sir," said the girl.

Austin turned quickly. A rustle of drapery, a quick step, and mother and son were clasped in each other's arms.

Let us leave them during the moments of their first greeting — leave them to ask and to answer the thousand questions which are to bridge the gap of their long separation. The story of the sickness and death of husband and father must be recounted in broken voice, and the weary hours passed since then told with many sighs. Thus the stream of life which diverged years before, comes together again like a river parted by an island.

"How long the time seems, Austin, since you left us, five years ago!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy.

"Yes, five long years!" repeated Austin. "But I have been so lonesome — so entirely without friends — that it has seemed even longer than that! I have often wished that Kenneth were with me."

"O, to that I could never have consented!"

"No — and though I should have enjoyed immensely having him with me, I never expected it," replied Austin.

"It was hard enough, in your absence," continued Mrs. Hardy, "to let him go even as far as Paris, and I consented only because his health seemed to demand the change."

"I am so glad to know that he is fully restored!"

"Yes; his residence abroad has worked wonders for him! But for the pictures which you have seen, you would scarcely recognize him."

"I wish that I might have an opportunity to try," said Austin. "He has not yet learned of my arrival, has he?"

"No, not yet, or he would have been here before this time. He will soon come, however," said Mrs. Hardy, glancing at her watch, "for I sent a message to him before I came in."

"Helene I have already seen," continued

Austin. "How beautiful a woman she has grown to be! But where is cousin Dora? She has not left you, I hope?"

"O, no! Although she is now of age, and has control of her own property, she still prefers making this her home. She is out for the day, but will return before dark. You know that we had no warning of your coming?"

"That was entirely my own fault," said Austin, "for not having cabled you from London."

"And you must have left the Cape much sooner than you expected?"

"Yes, I did. And on the voyage I took advantage of every opportunity to gain a day, for I was impatient of delay."

"And you will not leave me again, I hope?"

"Only temporarily! You know that for several years I have contemplated returning to New York to engage in business, and I had already begun negotiations for the sale of my interest in the mine a month before receiving the news of father's death. With the exception of one matter—which can receive attention at some future time—I completed the sale as

hastily as possible, and at once set out for home, where I now expect to remain."

The mother did not reply, but her satisfaction expressed itself in a gentle pressure of the hand which clasped her own.

"You have written me so often of late," she said, after a short pause, "of something you intended confiding to me as soon as we should meet?"

"Yes, something that I preferred to tell rather than to write. Have you never suspected what it is?" asked Austin, full of his own consciousness of the subject.

"No. Why should I? You have never given me the slightest hint."

"That is true, and I should not have expected it. But I shall not be long in telling you," he began.

"Listen!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Hardy. "Someone comes—it must be your brother."

At this moment Kenneth hastily entered, as Austin sprang to his feet. Then each drew back a step and glanced into the other's eyes, when, without a word, the distance between them vanished and they embraced — not as

girls embrace, but awkwardly, as men do, chest to chest with arms obliquely crossed.

When their first greetings were over they seated themselves, and the three had much to say to each other.

While there was some family likeness between these brothers, with that the resemblance ceased, and further comparison would be a matter of contrasts. Kenneth was of medium stature, and of nervous organization, though with just enough of the sanguine in his temperament to rescue his features from being too sharp, and his disposition from being too angular. His hair was dark and curly, his complexion clear and florid. He, too, was bearded, though not so heavily as his brother. His nervous organization made him quick and vivacious in manner, though the sanguine element permitted that repose which goes with a hopeful disposition. Unlike his brother, who was more practical, Kenneth was full of sentiment. Yet, while his mind ran rather to the abstract, still, in all that he did, he was so methodical that none of his energies were lost, and thus he accomplished more than would be expected of one of his nature.

Above all, Kenneth was quick to the point of impetuosity. Like a woman, he arrived at conclusions by that process of rapid reasoning called intuition. And, as a rule, his intuitions were correct. But, as reasoning is sometimes false, through fault of premise or of process, so intuitions may now and then be wrong. When he was right, however, his quick decision and rapid action gave him an impetus which soon placed him many steps in advance. On the other hand, when he was wrong, his impetuosity precipitated disaster so suddenly that he was never able to escape the crash which followed. But on such occasions his ingenuity would soon come to his rescue, and enable him to recover lost ground by the adoption of new expedients, with which he seemed to be ever ready.

The conversation in which mother and sons were engaged had taken a practical turn.

"You understood that after your father's death," Mrs. Hardy was saying, "I decided to make no attempt to keep this immense house myself, and therefore I leased it to Mr. Howard, who for more than three years had been its manager. I reserved only this suite of rooms

for ourselves; but, as we now have company, you shall have a room in the hall-way above."

"Company?" asked Austin.

"Yes. Helene's former school-mate, Madge Irving, is making her home with us while her father is in Mexico, where he will be detained for another year. And Gordon Wright, who used to live here, is back on a visit as Kenneth's guest."

"Is that the Wright who was in the engineer service?"

"Yes. It was he who first suggested that his profession would be a good one for Kenneth to adopt. But he is out of business now, and almost distracted over the misfortune which led to the loss of his position."

"Why! — is it so serious?" asked Austin.

"Yes, it is very serious, indeed!" spoke up Kenneth. "On the completion of the New York and Chicago Railway, in the construction of which he was engaged, he accepted a position in the company's service, and became one of its most efficient officers. But one day last winter, on leaving his office to go to lunch, he failed to close the door of the safe, and in his absence a sneak-thief, as is supposed, entered

and abstracted a package containing twenty thousand dollars in bank-notes. Poor Gordon, who returned in less than thirty minutes, was almost wild when the loss was reported to him."

"And has no clue to the thief ever been found?" asked Austin.

"None whatever! Diligent search was made, and descriptions of some of the bills — which were new, and their numbers known — were advertised far and wide, but without result."

"But they do not suspect him, do they?"

"O, no!" was the quick reply. "But since the loss was the result of his carelessness, the company felt called upon to demand his resignation."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Austin. "I do not wonder that he is distressed!"

"He might be reinstated in his former position," continued Kenneth, "if he could make good the loss, but this he will never be able to do. He has become extremely melancholy over the matter, and almost a monomaniac on the subject of large sums of money. Mr. Arnold says that he never knew anyone to be so strangely affected."

"And what makes the affair doubly sad," broke in Mrs. Hardy, "is that he is engaged to Madge, and they were to have been married as soon as her father returns. The marriage, however, is now indefinitely postponed,—he fears, forever,—although she refuses to share this gloomy view."

"Just like a woman!" exclaimed Austin. Then turning to his brother, he asked: "What Mr. Arnold is it of whom you speak, Kenneth?"

"O, it is a Mr. Philip Arnold, of Cape Town," answered Kenneth. "He came to the city last December, and has been stopping here ever since. Having lived in South Africa, we had hoped that he might be able to tell us something of you, but he says that he never met you, and had not even heard your name. Do you know him?"

"I never met him there," replied Austin, "for in the last four years all my time has been spent up at the mines, while he was at the Town, it seems?"

"Yes, he practiced law there for several years."

"Does he intend remaining here much longer, do you know?"

"He said but yesterday," answered Kenneth, "that the business which had brought him — some legal affair in connection with the settlement of an estate — was almost concluded, and that he may leave at any moment."

Again the conversation turned to the subject of Austin's experience in diamond mining, and an appointment was made for the evening, when all were to be asked to meet him, and to see some rich specimens which he had brought with him.

The three now separated to dress for dinner, and Kenneth conducted his brother to his room. Before leaving each other the two brothers entered into further conversation, Kenneth the while sitting by and watching Austin as he extracted articles necessary to his toilet from a much disordered valise. Kenneth was trying to accustom his eyes to his brother's altered appearance. He did not realize that time had wrought as great a change in himself! We never do. Others may grow old, but eternal youth is ours.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRICE OF HONOR.

AMONG those who were gathered in Mrs. Hardy's parlor on the evening of Austin's arrival, were three with whom the reader is not yet acquainted.

Madge Irving — one of these — was a strikingly handsome girl. Although a blonde, she was a gifted with that rare combination of light hair and dark eyes which nature occasionally bestows upon her favorites. Her lips, when parted, displayed rows of perfect teeth; when closed, their firm compression emphasized the presence in her character of the element of strong determination. Her perfect self-poise and ease of action revealed a conscious power which her regular features and expressive face helped to confirm.

Although the element of strength in her character was so pronounced, yet her limited experience in the affairs of the world had, thus

far, permitted but light demand to be made upon it. It had served its chief purpose in preserving her naturalness while surrounded by those conditions which are supposed to be fatal to such a result in one who is young, beautiful, and the only daughter of an indulgent father.

Between this girl and her friend Helene Evarts there was sufficient likeness to permit a mutual understanding which formed the basis of a congenial friendship. On the other hand, there were sufficient contrasts of character to enable the one to understand the other a little better than she understood herself, and thus to strengthen their bond of union by making them mutually considerate. Helene, though capable of deeper feeling, was less aggressive than Madge. Madge would be quick to resent an injury, but would almost as quickly forgive, and soon forget; Helene would be slow to forgive, and would never forget.

Dora Macy sat near Helene, resting her arm on the latter's chair. An artist would have placed her in that position for the sake of the contrast — a blonde and a brunette. Dora had dark eyes, dark and curly hair, and a face

expressive of intelligence rather than of beauty. In appearance and manner, the ordinary observer would have called her indifferent; those who knew her better, interesting; while she became charming only to those who had learned to love her.

Dora had always been regarded as being "peculiar." For the sake of indulgence in her tastes — which were inclined to the literary — she had neglected many of those accomplishments which "society" demands. In a word, she was non-conventional: therein consisted her peculiarity.

Gordon Wright, the man upon whom Madge had bestowed her affections, and to whom she was betrothed, sat next to her. Although his countenance showed plain marks of the depressing emotions under which he labored, it also revealed the face of a man who, under all ordinary circumstances, had perfect command of himself. His smooth-shaven face was naturally round and full, though now, as the effect of many sleepless nights and anxious days, his cheeks were hollow and his gray eyes slightly sunken.

Austin had finished his narrative, and all

had gathered closely about the table in the center of the room to examine the promised display.

Opening his coat, and taking from about his waist a wide leather belt which, he said, he was accustomed to wear beneath all his clothing, Austin laid it upon the table and produced from one of the many pockets in its margin a small parcel, from which he removed a rubber band, and then several layers of soft and softer paper. This process was repeated until there appeared two rolls of cotton which, when separated, revealed a mass of sparkling stones almost dazzling in their splendor as they threw back, scattered in a thousand rainbow hues, the brilliant light of the chandelier.

At the sight, all uttered exclamations of surprise, and the ladies could not have bent over the wrappings with more eager interest had their careful unfolding brought to light a nest of little babies.

Some of the larger stones had distinct histories, and even the dates of their finding, like the discovery of continents, were matters of record. All these items Austin carefully detailed.

While those who were gathered about the table in Mrs. Hardy's parlor were absorbed in the examination of the freshly-opened parcel, there was, for a moment, another presence in the room.

First a foot was extended, as though quietly feeling its way. After the foot was duly placed it was surmounted by the body and form of a man who, evidently, did not expect to find himself in so numerous a company, for, unobserved, he quickly withdrew, as quietly as he had entered.

But after this form had disappeared from the room, the little upright line of light which showed through the narrow crack where the door hinged against the jamb, was for several minutes eclipsed. Had those about the table been less intent in their examination of the precious stones, they might have observed, through this crack, almost six feet above the floor, a flashing jewel which sparkled even as the diamonds did.

Austin now took from another pocket in the belt a parcel, which, when opened, revealed a number of dull, uninteresting stones, which one might almost expect to pass unnoticed on a pebbly beach.

"The diamonds which I have already shown you," said he, "I sent to London last winter to be cut; but these," he explained, "are diamonds 'in the rough,' just as they come from the mine."

"And were all these beautiful gems cut from such rough-looking stones?" asked Dora.

"Yes," replied Austin; "just as a sculptor may carve a graceful statue from an awkward block of marble."

"Really?" asked Helene, as though seeking further confirmation. "How interesting that is!" she added, as she took up the largest one and examined it closely.

"But now please tell us, Mr. Hardy," said Madge, "which is the finest diamond of them all?"

"That, like the choicest wine at the feast, I have reserved until the last," replied Austin, proceeding to take from a narrow pocket in the belt a parcel smaller than the others. As he was removing its wrappings, he added: "I had intended leaving all these at the bank on my arrival in the city, but when I left the custom-house it was too late by an hour. Hence, you see, it is only to an accident that you owe this display to-night."

At length he brought to view a sparkling brilliant.

"Here it is," said he; "the largest diamond ever taken from our mine!"

"O, how beautiful!" cried Helene, whose exclamation was echoed by all. "How it sparkles! Let me take it in my hand, please?"

Helene received it, and placed it against the third finger of her left hand, as though it were an immense setting in a ring.

Madge, in turn, extended her hand to receive it.

"May I take it? O, what a magnificent stone! What is its value, Mr. Hardy, expressed in paltry dollars?"

"An offer of twenty thousand has been declined. Some day I expect to sell it for more than that."

At this moment Madge placed the gem in the hand of Gordon, who sat next to her.

"See, Gordon," said she, "it's nothing but a stone."

"Nothing but a stone!" repeated Gordon. "Nothing but a stone! And yet it may hold the price of a man's honor."

Extending his outstretched palm, and averting his head, he cried, excitedly:

"Take it away! Riches that are not ours only mock us! O, take it — it burns my hand!"

Madge quickly took the diamond, while Kenneth arose from his seat and stepped to Gordon's side.

"Come, Gordon," said he, gently, "I fear you are not well to-night. Let me go to your room with you?"

At this Gordon arose and put his hand to his forehead.

"O, yes, I am perfectly well — only a sudden headache — that's all. But I will go. Good night!" And, accompanied by Kenneth, he left the room just as the line of light in the crack of the door passed from eclipse.

When the two had disappeared, Madge, in a voice trembling with emotion, cried:

"It is all my fault! How could I have been so thoughtless!"

Mrs. Hardy made a kind but ineffectual effort to comfort the distressed girl, while Helene and Dora, whose quicker instincts divined the uselessness of such an attempt, after a few words gently led her from the room. They knew that Madge would find relief only in tears.

CHAPTER VI.

"THEN SHED YOUR TEARS FOR ME."

As soon as the young ladies had gone, Austin hastily gathered up the diamonds which had been the exciting cause of the unhappy incident, and, restoring them to the belt, placed the latter beneath his tightly buttoned coat.

"I am very sorry," said he, "that the evening should have terminated so unfortunately for Gordon and Madge."

"Yes, but no one could have foreseen it," said Mrs. Hardy. "However, its effects, I think, will not be permanent."

"I hope so, sincerely, for it is plain that Gordon's present burden is all that he can bear."

"Yes, and more than he deserves. Poor fellow! he tries hard to rally from his depression!"

"With that girl to encourage him, he should meet with greater success," remarked Austin.

"Yes, I quite agree with you; although it is a view of the subject which would be more apt to occur to you than to me," said his mother, smiling.

"You will be still more inclined, mother, to understand my appreciation of the sentiment in the case, when you learn what I had begun to tell you this evening."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy, in evident surprise, "I had not suspected that it was of that nature!"

"Did you not?" said Austin, as though enjoying keeping her in ignorance of the main point as long as possible. "Then you shall have the mystery solved."

Austin began his disclosure by stating a truism, which, though as old as the race, he no doubt thought that he was formulating for the first time.

"I believe," said he, "that no man goes through life — whatever the end may be — without at some time feeling that the love of some good woman is necessary to the completion of his happiness."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Hardy.

"At least that has been my experience," he

continued; "and the feeling has grown until it has become the one thought of my existence. Five years ago, when I went thousands of miles from home, I carried with me an image which had already impressed itself on my life, and from that day to this it has been constantly with me. My return to my native land was first prompted by its memory, which I found it impossible longer to resist."

Mrs. Hardy listened with expectant attention, seeming to study a figure in the carpet. As Austin paused, she looked up into his face with evident pride, and yet with that apprehensive sense of coming loss and divided affections which a mother, under such circumstances, instinctively feels.

"She is a fortunate being, Austin, who has awakened such feelings in your breast. Go on; tell me more of her."

"There is little more to tell," continued Austin, speaking rapidly and earnestly. "In childhood I was jealous of her every glance not mine. When she was still very young I left home, but, unknown to anyone — even to herself — I have loved her all these years with a love which time and distance have served

only to intensify. I return to find that she has blossomed into a beautiful womanhood, of which this image," said he, taking from his pocket a picture, "is but the bud of promise."

Mrs. Hardy glanced an instant at the card which was placed in her hand, then dropped it suddenly and looked up at her son with an expression of mingled pain and solicitude.

"Helene!" she cried.

"Mother! What is it?" gasped Austin, almost in an agony of suspense.

Mrs. Hardy extended her arms and rested her tightly clasped hands upon her knee. Not trusting herself to look up again, she only groaned in anguish:

"O, my poor boy!"

"Mother, tell me!" cried Austin, becoming more and more excited.

Still she was silent.

"Helene is mine, and no man on earth shall take her from me!" cried Austin.

Mrs. Hardy could but clench her hands more tightly. But, as soon as she could summon strength to speak, her words struggled for utterance as she slowly said:

"I know not for which my tears should flow, for you — or — your brother Kenneth!"

"Kenneth!" cried Austin, starting to his feet.

For a few moments he panted with quickly-drawn breath, while his muscles played convulsively under the sway of the mingled emotions which filled his breast. Then slowly sinking into his chair, he bowed his head upon the table and buried his face in his hands, as he said, in choking voice:

"Then, mother, shed your tears for me!"

Mrs. Hardy waited for the storm to subside before attempting to offer consolation or sympathy. Then kneeling at his side, with one arm over his shoulder, she whispered, tenderly:

"My dear boy, my heart bleeds for you, but I know not what to say!"

. . . .

The privacy of the conversation which had thus been passing between mother and son had, so far as they knew, been undisturbed. And it would have been well if no part of it had fallen on other ears than theirs. But Kenneth, after having spent some time with Gordon, at the latter's urgent request, left him in order

to rejoin the company in the room below. As he approached the door of the parlor in the lower hall-way, he heard the voices of his mother and brother within. Something in their tones which seemed to betray unusual excitement led him to quicken his steps, and he was almost across the threshold when he heard from his brother's lips words which went to his heart like a knife: "*Helene is mine, and no man on earth shall take her from me!*"

Almost stunned by the sudden blow which these words conveyed, he checked himself, and for a moment listened. There came from his mother no word of explanation or of remonstrance. A sense of faintness came over him, and fearing lest he should be noticed, and his agitation observed, he slowly withdrew, partially supporting himself along the wall, and made his way to his own room, which was not far distant.

. . . .

Austin and his mother, unconscious of the silent scene which had been enacted so near by, for a long time remained too deeply moved to speak.

Finally, raising himself slightly, Austin returned the caress which accompanied his mother's last words, and said, in a husky voice:

"O, mother, there is nothing you can say to comfort me! Were it anyone else in the world, I would contest the prize, and let her heart decide between him and me. But I will not take the chance of wrecking my brother's happiness in a blind attempt to assure my own!"

Mrs. Hardy did not reply. She only shed tears of sympathy for her suffering boy.

"Mother, I am calmer now," said Austin. "Tell me about it."

"The story is soon told," replied his mother. "Kenneth has always been very fond of Helene, and on his return from Paris for his first summer vacation, he told her his hopes; but she, without an absolute negative, deferred her answer. The next year the subject was reopened, but she seemed more reluctant than before. Last spring, however, having finished his course and returned home permanently, he won from her a consenting answer. This occurred shortly before your father's illness,

and amidst the many events which followed little has been said on the subject.

"Once, only, Kenneth let fall a remark which led me to suspect that he might have some misgivings in his mind. I was not certain, and may have inferred too much, but I took pains to say what I could to allay any apprehensions that he may have felt.

"Helene, it is true, gave reluctant consent, and for a long time was unusually reserved. I myself did not understand it at first, but, on consideration, I have become convinced that it was due to the promptings of her own sensitive nature. Knowing the peculiar position which she occupies in our family, and knowing that Kenneth's association with her is the result of what she considers to be kindness on the part of your father and myself, she feared lest he should make a mistake which would some day cause them both deep and permanent regret.

"Helene is, I think, just beginning to outgrow this feeling, though I am satisfied that she has all the time been sure of her own heart; while Kenneth, more impatient than she, and with no such motive for restraint, shows

plainly that it is the one thought of his life. He asked that he might be the first to inform you on your arrival, and it is for this reason that the subject has not been mentioned before."

After this long recital Austin was silent for several minutes. Finally he said, more calmly:

"Mother, Kenneth must never know my feelings."

"No, he never shall," replied Mrs. Hardy.

"And in order that he may not, I must leave here immediately."

Mrs. Hardy did not speak. Her emotion expressed itself in a sudden look of alarm.

"It will not be for long, mother," said Austin, understanding the cause of her anxiety. "Sooner or later I must have returned to the Cape, and now it is best that I should go at once."

"O, no, Austin, you will not leave me so soon, after all these years of absence?"

"I *must* go, mother! I could not endure the trial which every day and hour would bring. But you should not grieve, for I shall soon return, and, away from here, make a new home for you and myself."

Being partially reassured by these words, Mrs. Hardy clasped Austin's hand in both her own, and said:

"You will surely come back to me soon?"

"Yes, very soon," repeated Austin. "But meanwhile, mother," he continued, "you must hasten this marriage, for it must take place before my return."

"But this sudden departure? No one will understand! What can I say?"

"Leave that to me," he replied. "I will explain it as best I can."

At Austin's request his mother obtained for him pen and ink from a cabinet near at hand. Seating himself at the table, he endorsed his name on a paper which he took from a book in his pocket. This he handed to his mother.

"There is a draft for two thousand pounds. Give it to Kenneth — not on his wedding-day, but as soon as I am gone."

Mrs. Hardy took the narrow strip of paper with trembling fingers.

"Tell him," added Austin, "that I said he must devote it to that object on which his life is bent."

After a long conversation which followed the mother and son bade each other good-night, and parted, she to carry with her all the burden of a son's grief, as only a mother can.

From the time when, with tireless patience and tender words, she soothes her weeping child and kisses his wounded finger, to the day when the bearded man, yet still "her boy," comes with wounded heart, a mother lives again in her children. No sacrifice is too great for her love, no cry is too faint for her ear, and though in time of trouble all else fail, there is safe refuge in a mother's love!

But only those who have ever felt that sense of utter desolation, who have known what it is to be bowed down with despair, can measure the grief of him who suffered! If it were not that added endurance comes with increase of sorrow, he would have sunk under his heavy burden of grief.

For a long time Austin sat motionless, his head bowed upon his arm, which rested on the table. Once, only, he raised himself wearily, took up the picture which lay upon the table and returned it to his pocket, as though the burden which he must bear for years could thus be lightly buried.

CHAPTER VII.

A COMPLETE SURRENDER.

Austin had no sooner restored the picture to his pocket, and again bowed his head upon his arm, than a foot quietly stole across the threshold of the room and took a position on the carpet. This foot was soon followed by another, and above them both arose the body and form of a man, who, for a few moments, silently contemplated the bowed figure before him.

Finally — feeling another presence in the room — Austin slowly raised his head, and, as though not comprehending its meaning, said dejectedly :

"Well, sir?"

"I have come," said the figure, "to give you an opportunity to state, as briefly as possible, the nature of your business with me."

Austin drew his hand across his eyes, and looked again at the man who stood before him.

"O, it is you, is it?" said he, slowly.

"I repeat, sir," said the figure, "that I have come in order that you may state, as briefly as possible, the nature of your business with me."

Gradually the light returned to Austin's eyes. He now leaned slightly forward, and said, more earnestly:

"The brevity of our interview, Mr. Arnold, is to be determined more by yourself than by me."

"I do not so consider it."

"I have already informed you that my only desire is that you should restore to the child of Horace Crane the property which is hers."

Arnold made no reply.

"Have you nothing to say?" asked Austin.

"My only answer is, that I do not recognize your authority to call me to account in any matter whatsoever."

"Is that final?"

"It is — except that I will consent to state, for your information, that I have no knowledge of any such property as that of which you speak. And that ends it!" said he, moving toward the door.

"Not yet!" said Austin, with a gesture of restraint.

Taking from his vest-pocket a ring, he extended it to the other's view.

"Perhaps you will let this convince you that I am right!"

Philip Arnold was not sufficiently master of himself to restrain a slight start at the sight of this. But the exclamation which involuntarily rose to his lips was changed to a hiss as it passed his teeth, while, instead of speaking, he curled his lips into a smile, and vainly tried to assume an air of indifference.

Austin was quick to detect every change of feature.

"Ah, I see that you recognize that!"

Arnold was silent.

"You compel me," continued Austin, "to repeat the entire story connected with this ring, the main features of which will not be strange to your ears."

Still the other was silent.

"You will speak, I think, when I tell you that, four months ago, at the Rencliff Diamond Mine, South Africa, the breaking of a piece of machinery wounded several men, one of whom,

John Temple, died in my arms. When he knew that he had but a few hours to live, he told me that a lawyer, named Philip Arnold, in settling the affairs of Horace Crane, deceased, conceived the idea of robbing the estate of a large number of valuable bonds. But in order to accomplish this it was necessary for him to gain the co-operation of one John Temple, a former clerk of Crane's, and the only one besides himself who had definite knowledge of their existence.

"This he succeeded in doing, and the two divided the spoils on the solemn agreement that each should secrete his portion for a period of five years, when, it was thought, they might be brought forth and converted without danger of exciting suspicion. This was done, and, as a pledge of mutual good faith, two rings were made and worn.

"This ring which I have in my hand," said Austin, holding it to his eyes for a moment, and then again directing his gaze at Arnold, "has a curious setting. It consists of a mottled blue stone — one-half of a broken pebble. There is but one other ring in the world which is the exact counterpart of this one — whose

setting will fit to this as a sea-shell fits its mate — and that ring is now on the first finger of your left hand!" concluded Austin, pointing in that direction.

"That is false — it is false as hell!" cried Arnold, now throwing off all restraint.

"If you are an innocent man you will permit me to put your ring to the test," said Austin, extending toward Arnold the ring which he held in his own hand.

"You have no right to make any such request, sir!"

"And do you decline to grant it?"

"Most emphatically!" replied Arnold, again moving toward the door.

"Stop!" cried Austin, quickly. "I make a final demand. Will you take that pen and write, stating where those papers may be found?"

"Never!" replied Arnold, thus surprised into betraying himself in his answer, while his eyes flashed fire and his lips were tightly compressed.

"As you please," said Austin, coolly, moving to a part of the room which cut off the other's retreat by the door, and reaching toward a

button in the wall, the pressing of which would summon an attendant from the office. "John Temple, before revealing to me the hiding-place of his share of the spoils, extracted from me a promise that I would take no measures to have you punished, providing you would do likewise. But, on your refusal, I am left to pursue whatever course I choose. I have in my possession sufficient evidence on which to have you arrested this night, and held for trial. Defy me, and I shall turn you over to the authorities in less than five minutes. Do as I demand, and, on my promise to a dying man, you go free. Which shall it be?"

If Philip Arnold was a villain, he was no fool — except as all villains are fools. With folded arms and contracted brows he stood motionless for some minutes, seeming to gaze into vacancy.

Possessed of an amount of shrewdness and cunning which honest men are never called upon to employ, when dealing with honest men, his very shrewdness taught him how far he could go in his daring schemes, while his cunning helped him to disarm suspicion when its continuance might involve him in deeper

danger. He knew, too, well enough, that the man with whom he now had to deal was determined, courageous, and not to be turned from his purpose by any wiles which he might employ.

For these reasons, and, it may be, for others, Arnold yielded with a readiness and grace which astonished even the man who knew that he had put him on the defensive and driven him to extremities.

"You might as well have the bonds," said he, suddenly looking up.

"Very well!" said Austin, with equal readiness. "Now take that paper and write these words:

"*Valuable papers, the rightful property of Alice Crane, only child of Horace Crane, deceased, may be found*——"

Arnold seated himself at the table and wrote rapidly, at Austin's dictation.

"Now finish it, and sign," said Austin.

Arnold wrote a few words more, and then handed the paper to Austin, without a twitch of his fingers or a movement of the muscles of his face. Austin read:

"'—— *in Cape Town cemetery, buried in her father's coffin.*'

"I see!" he exclaimed. "The night before the funeral you secreted them in the metallic casket which contained the body?"

"That is not hard to guess!" said Arnold, bitterly.

"No," repeated Austin, looking at him as an intending purchaser might view a horse, "that is not hard to guess!"

"And now I presume that you are content?" said Arnold, rising.

"Not yet!" replied Austin, quickly. "I have no means of knowing that those papers are still in the place designated. I learn that it is announced that at any moment you may set out for the Cape?"

"Well?"

"On the next steamer I shall start for there myself; nothing is more natural than that we should travel in company. When that property is finally in my possession, you may consider this affair settled."

"You are over-particular!" said Arnold, testily. "It is true, however, that I am about to leave New York, and if you choose to take passage by the same boat I know of nothing to prevent."

"Very well! On that understanding we will now part," said Austin, waving his hand as though in dismissal.

Arnold left the room without a word, while Austin seated himself at the table which a few moments before the other had occupied, and taking from his pocket a small memorandum-book, he spent some time in writing in its pages.

Finally he arose, turned out the gas, and sought his own room through the dimly-lighted halls and stair-ways.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NIGHT'S WORK.

It is night in the great city. The square blocks of houses, sponge-like, have absorbed the masses who a few hours earlier filled the streets, and look as though they, too, had closed their drowsy eyes in sleep. But one deserted shell — whose interior has recently been consumed by fire — stands with its hollow-eyed walls gazing at the opposite rows, as though amazed that they should continue to harbor human beings.

To many this night means but a short time spent in refreshing slumber, and the flat roofs shelter a million sleeping people. To others it is full of events, and the silent walls enclose scenes as active as those which court the day.

But the streets are seldom entirely deserted. Scores of carriages, bearing those returning from theatre or opera, rushed by an hour ago. Now scores of others, carrying those who have

left the later reception or ball, spin over the resounding pavement. At longer and longer intervals a red eye of light in the distance tells of a passing car, with its tinkling bell and plodding horses.

Occasionally a slowly-sauntering policeman, measuring his beat, glances carelessly over an area railing, or watches indifferently the rapid approach of a late pedestrian, who suddenly turns and runs up a flight of stone steps. There, after fumbling in his pocket awhile, he stoops over and inserts a flat key into a narrow slit in the door, which opens at his touch and then shuts him in with a clang, while it looks forth again upon the quiet gas-lit street, as innocently as a dozen other doors on either side.

Now a cold rain sets in, and the streets become more deserted than before. On the carriages which at rare intervals appear in sight, the driver, holding the reins in one hand, stoops over, tugs at some black object beneath his seat, and finally succeeds in bringing forth a garment of rubber-cloth. After much awkward effort he inserts his arms into this, stands erect, adjusts the skirts, reseats himself, touches

the wavering horses with his whip, and the carriage rattles off at quickened pace.

Of the blue-coated officer, nothing is to be seen. A solitary pedestrian, with umbrella headed against the wind, presses along over the wet and shining pavement.

Finally, the one man disappears, and the street is still. The chimes of a distant cathedral bell faintly toll the hour of two — but there are few to hear it, for those who sleep, now sleep soundest. The glass octahedrons which shelter the flickering flames of the street-lamps, weep plentiful tears, while the sweep of sheets of rain in the ever-increasing wind, sounds like a sigh.

But while scenes like these may be witnessed in the open streets, who knows what is passing within the thick-walled houses?

In this city alone, every hour some will be born, and every hour some will die. In the night the sufferings of the sick increase, and pain holds its victim in sharper embrace. Those in fever, with hotter skin, restlessly toss and cry for water to quench their burning thirst. Those who by day, with open eyes, talked intelligibly, now with half-closed lids mutter in

low delirium, while their weary watchers, with anxious hearts, long for morning and the doctor to come — the most unwelcome and welcome visitor that ever crossed a threshold.

Through the night, in the dark vaults of banks, interest silently accumulates on untold millions of bonds, and the rich awake to find that they have grown richer while they slept. But the poor are roused from sweet oblivion to face the poverty and toil of another day, and burdens are as unequally distributed as they have been for six thousand years, and as they will be for thousands of years to come.

But there are still other things which hide beneath the black cloak of night. In the darkness the guilty form of crime creeps forth, and does its stealthy work while others sleep. Gambling, debauchery, theft, rapine, murder — the night belongs to them!

As the sky lightens with the first faint streaks of dawn, the street wakes into new activity. Covered wagons fly rapidly from door to door. Smoke issues anew from the black throats of thousands of chimneys. Men hasten along, throwing papers against area doors from their ever-lessening bundles.

The life which began below stairs, gradually mounts from floor to floor — blinds are thrown open, curtains raised, and moving forms appear at windows. In gradually increasing numbers men issue from numerous doorways, and hasten to right or left for 'bus or car. The walks fill with people, carriages crowd the streets, and the busy hum of another day has begun.

The members of that household which we left as night closed in must wake to act their part in the drama of the coming day.

Kenneth, after a wakeful and troubled night, was the first to appear in the parlor, which he did at an unusually early hour.

On retiring to his room the night before he had thrown himself on his bed and burst into an agony of grief. His first feeling was one of loss — utter, irremediable loss — as though that which he had cherished as part of his life had, in an instant, been snatched from him, and he left as though it had never been.

And yet he could not at once have resigned himself to his discovery, had not his mind been previously prepared for its unquestioning acceptance.

But now, in looking back over the past, all

was clear — now he understood why Helene had so reluctantly yielded to his entreaties; why she had been more reserved since their engagement than before; why, when he had last mentioned the subject, she had expressed a desire that their marriage might be delayed another year.

In the past he had wondered at all this. Had he overpersuaded her?— had she listened to his pleadings only because of fancied obligation due to his parents' care? Or, was there someone who rivalled him in her affections?

Hitherto he had failed to find answer to these mental queries, but now it was all too plain! And yet, in running over the brief list of those who might occupy the cherished place which he had fondly imagined to be his own, he had thought of everyone except his absent brother.

Thus thinking, he had fallen asleep. But his sleep had been troubled, and full of vivid dreams. He had awakened with a start, and found himself, full dressed, lying on his bed in the cold and darkened room. He had gone to the window and looked out between the slats of the blinds — the smooth stone pavements shone

in the gas-light as though wet by recent rain. He closely scanned the face of his watch — three o'clock. He had slept two hours.

Chilled and tired, he had removed his clothing and again sought his pillow — but not to sleep. Thoughts crowded upon each other in such quick succession that his brain was in a whirl. A thousand questions called for answer.

What meant that secret conference between his mother and brother? What relation had they borne to the drama which Helene and he had been enacting? Had his mother knowingly permitted him to deceive himself?

O, no! — she, of all mothers, would never have done that! Had she not calmed his fears at a time when he had purposely given her a glimpse of what had been working in his mind? And had she not promised that he should be the first to inform his brother? And would she have broken a promise? No, never!

He was sure, then, that it was not the fault of his mother.

Then Austin? If he, in all these years, had had some claim on Helene that others knew not of, why had he waited until this late day to assert it? Or, having waited, why had he

shown such unseemly haste on first reaching home?

But since Austin had seen fit thus to assert his claim, he should find no one in his way. Helene should be free to resume a compact which, evidently, she regretted ever having broken. In the morning he would seek the earliest opportunity to tell her she was free. Yes, he would tell her!

But to do this would cost him such an effort! It would almost break his heart! He was not sure that he was equal to it! And, moreover, he was not supposed to know what had occurred in the parlor that night. And there was plenty of time! Why not wait? Why not feign ignorance of the discovery which he had made, inform his brother of his engagement, as originally planned, and watch the effect of the announcement on him?

After all, he would not tell Helene. No, he would not tell her!

Going over this circle of thought again and again, he had restlessly tossed for hours. O, if it had not happened! O, if that heartache would only cease! O, if the night would ever end!

As soon as morning came he arose and went to the parlor. There he waited for some time, expecting that at any moment his brother might enter. The part which he had determined to act demanded that he should meet Austin as though nothing had happened to disturb their relations to each other.

But Kenneth did not realize that he carried in his face such plain evidence of his night of grief and pain that others would be sure to anxiously inquire its cause. And should this occur, he was prepared with no explanation which would seem to account for his altered appearance.

It still wanted an hour of breakfast-time. It would be a brotherly act, and in accordance with the purpose which he intended to pursue, to go to Austin's room to greet him on the first morning following his arrival. This he did.

There was no response to his gentle rap, and none to the louder knock which followed. He tried the knob. The door was locked. Listening, all was still. Could he have arisen early and left his room?

He turned and knocked at the door of the room opposite, which was occupied by Gordon

Wright. Evidently there was no one within, for the door was locked, and no answer came to his knock. Perhaps the two had gone out together.

He went to the office and there inquired whether anyone had seen his brother pass that way. No, no one had seen him.

Hastening again to Austin's room, now accompanied by Mr. Howard, who carried a pass-key, they opened the door, and entered.

Austin was there — in bed.

But the lower part of his face was covered with a folded towel, and his chest was motionless.

Mr. Howard, who was first, lifted the towel, then quickly turned and tried to draw Kenneth from the room. But the latter rushed past him to the prostrate form of his brother, took his cold face between his hands, shook him, called him by name, raised the drooping lids and searchingly looked into the sightless eyes. Then turning, he excitedly cried:

"Is it so?"

Mr. Howard only nodded.

"O, it cannot be! Something must be done! We must restore him!" cried Kenneth, frantically.

Mr. Howard passed his hand beneath the body, between it and the bedclothes — it was cold, even there. He tried to bend an arm — it was rigid!

"It would be useless to try — he has been dead for hours."

Then Kenneth leaned over, pressed his lips again and again to the cold forehead, crying:

"O, my dear, dead brother! O, Austin, speak to me!"

Frenzied with grief, he forgot all surroundings, until Mr. Howard again took him gently by the arm and tried to lead him away. But Kenneth only cried:

"O, who has done it? Tell me what it means!"

He would then have rushed frantically from the room had not Mr. Howard restrained him, and begged him, for his mother's sake, to be calm. This appeal had its effect, and Kenneth endeavored to control himself. But in vain; he sank at the bedside, and sobbed like a child.

After the first force of his grief had spent itself, Mr. Howard urged him to make every effort to restrain his feelings, and to be the first to break the sad news to his mother. Kenneth started to obey.

But on passing through the parlor, in order to seek his mother's room, he met Helene, who, seeing his agitation, anxiously inquired its cause. In a voice thick with emotion, Kenneth said:.

"Helene, I must tell you — you will help my mother to bear it — Austin is dead!"

Helene grew white, started back, and in a hoarse voice whispered:

"O no, no! Kenneth, it cannot be! Tell me it is not so!"

"But, Helene, it is! Someone has killed him in the night!"

Helene gazed into Kenneth's face with an unmeaning look, as though her faculties were benumbed by the sudden intelligence, while she laid a hand on his arm, and her form visibly trembled.

Kenneth, taken by surprise, and mistaking the meaning of her emotion, clasped her detaining hand in his, and in a voice full of anguish, said:

"Helene, I did not know. Forgive me. I should have told you more gently. Can it be that I have misunderstood you so long?"

Helene's only answer was a low cry of pain,

as she fell fainting to the floor. Kenneth gently lifted her to a sofa, and at this moment his cousin Dora entered. After a hasty word to her concerning Austin 's death, he left her in charge of the unconscious girl, while he hastened to his mother's room.

Little use to caution him to be calm! Little use to tell him to restrain his feelings! The moment that his mother's eyes met his he rushed to her, threw himself into her arms, and cried:

"Austin! Austin! Austin!"

"What! Has he gone?" cried his mother.

"Worse!" groaned Kenneth.

"Not dead?" she shrieked.

Kenneth's fresh burst of grief was his only answer.

Then she did what every mother would have done — breathless, she rushed from the room, closely followed by Kenneth, along the hall, up the stairs, to that other room, and there she threw herself upon the lifeless form of her son, crying his name appealingly, as though a mother's voice might call him back to life.

Mr. Howard, who was still there, stepped

outside, closed the door, and left these two alone with their dead.

. . . .

In the parlor below, Dora, herself much excited, had loosened Helene's clothing, and with the aid of some cold water soon revived her.

When Helene was able to speak, Dora anxiously inquired particulars concerning Austin's sudden death.

"I know no more than you appear to," said Helene.

"O, how horrible!" cried Dora, scarcely able to restrain her own feelings. "I do not wonder that you fainted on hearing it!"

"I did not faint on hearing it—it was not that!" exclaimed Helene, quickly.

"Not that!" repeated Dora in surprise. "What then?" she cried.

Helene had intended letting no one know what had passed between Kenneth and herself, but, having been betrayed into revealing that there was something yet untold, Dora soon learned what had occurred.

"O," said Dora, deprecatingly, "I did not know it was so!"

"Did not know what was so?" asked Helene, quickly looking up.

"Why," answered Dora, hesitatingly, "that you — that — I mean, I never suspected what you have told me."

"What I have told you!" exclaimed Helene in surprise. "O, Dora!" she added, disconsolately, "I was sure that *you* would understand!"

"Understand what, dear?" asked Dora, drawing Helene more closely to her side. "Speak one word, please, and do not let me make a mistake," she whispered.

"That I *do* love Kenneth, and it was for his sake that I grieved," said Helene, bursting into tears.

"You poor child!" exclaimed Dora, kissing her fondly. "Then you will tell him at once, won't you?"

"No, no! In the midst of his grief, I shall not speak of mine."

"I do not understand?"

"O, his face had such a worn, such a dreadful look! It frightened me."

"But when this shock has passed, then you will tell him?" persisted Dora.

"No, I cannot!" said Helene quickly. "I

have no place to begin — it will not do! I will wait."

"But you will let me tell him?"

"No, no! I cannot permit it! Now that his brother is gone, he would not understand. No, not for worlds! Promise me, Dora, that you will never tell him — O, promise me, Dora!" cried Helene beseechingly, as she now fully realized the embarrassing position in which it would place her.

"I promise," said Dora, reluctantly.

O, these hypersensitive men! What a world of trouble they would save themselves, and what a world of pain they would save others, if they better understood a woman's nature; if they would not mistake reserve for indifference, and timidity for coldness; if they would take a woman at her word, once spoken, and not ask her to repeat it day after day!

A man should tell a woman everything, and be content if she only suggests, while he infers what remains untold. He should understand that when a woman loves, her No may sometimes mean yes, but her Yes means always yes.

CHAPTER IX.

HELD WITHOUT BAIL.

MEANWHILE Mr. Howard saw to it that all proper steps were taken. As soon as the authorities were notified an officer was placed in charge of the room, and no one was permitted to enter it except two detectives, who were summoned to investigate the crime.

Kenneth, on being questioned, gave an account of the occurrences of the preceding evening. This threw a flood of light on the case, and it was quickly concluded that the man had been murdered, and that the object was robbery, for the belt of diamonds was nowhere to be found, the pockets in his clothing were empty, and even his watch had disappeared.

It was suspected that the agent used was chloroform, for, though none could be detected, yet the towel which covered the dead man's face, and all the surroundings, indicated as much.

Moreover, he must have been overcome by it while sleeping, as the body lay in repose, and there was no disturbance of the bedclothes to indicate a struggle. But, as though to make doubly sure of his work, the murderer had cut a deep gash on the side of the neck nearest the wall, evidently having used a very sharp instrument. This, however, had been a useless precaution, for the throat had been cut only after the chloroform had done its fatal work. No crimson fluid had spurted from the severed vessels, bespattering wall and pillow; only a little dark blood had trickled down the side of the neck from between the lips of the gaping wound.

Beyond this no important discoveries were made.

In searching the floor — as detectives do — in the hope of finding a button, a scrap of paper, or a thread, nothing was discovered save a minute object which looked like a small piece of bone. It was very small — not much larger than an oat-seed — and by almost anyone else would have been passed unnoticed. But this man, who had once obtained his first clue to the perpetrator of a crime by finding a small

setting which had fallen from a ring, picked it up and carefully deposited it in his purse.

It remained to discover the perpetrator of the deed.

Who saw the murdered man last? Who and how many were acquainted with the fact that he had valuables on his person? Was it anyone in the house, or was it someone who had been on the steamer with him? Was it anyone who had seen him at the custom-house? Was it a "professional" who had done the work, or was it prompted by the quickly-excited cupidity of one who had suddenly become acquainted with the fact of his rich possessions? All these questions came up for solution.

His mother had seen him last, the night before, as he was about to retire to his room. Had anyone seen him later than that?

No, no one.

Who slept in other rooms in that part of the house? Had any of those occupying adjacent apartments been awake in the night, so that they might have heard unusual sounds?

Philip Arnold, whose room was not far distant, appeared at this moment, and the

question was put to him. Had he heard anything?

No. He had sought his own room earlier than usual the night before, for the purpose of writing some letters, which he held at that moment in his hand, ready for the post. After finishing the last one he had retired, and slept soundly until morning. He opened the door of his room and asked the men to enter and hold their consultation there, instead of in the hallway.

Who occupied the other rooms in that corridor?

Mr. Arnold was able to give them the name of the occupant of but one — that which was directly opposite the murdered man's chamber. For any other information they must apply to Mr. Howard. While he went to post his letters, they were welcome to the further use of his apartment.

One of the detectives went to summon Gordon Wright, to learn what he could tell of possible disturbances in the night. The door of his chamber was locked, and no response came from within. The man called his mate, and the two consulted together. Then one of them

went to ask Mr. Howard where they could find the occupant of that room.

Mr. Howard had not seen him, but he would inquire of others, and report. No one who was asked had seen Gordon Wright that morning. As the word went from person to person, one after another, they gathered at his door.

But, though they knocked and listened, there was only deathly silence within.

What did it mean? Horror of horrors! Could it be that he, too, had been robbed and murdered?

"Burst in the door!" someone said.

No, don't do that! The pass-key which opened the door of the room opposite will also open this — use that.

Gordon's door was swung wide open, and shading their eyes with lifted hands, all peered in.

No wonder it had been so silent — his room was vacant!

The two detectives entered, excluded all others, and closed and locked the door.

They found that the bed had not been opened, but that a heavy form had lain on the

outside, and there was the imprint of a head in one of the pillows.

They searched the room. On the carpet, near the foot of the bed, one of the men picked up a small stone — a single, uncut diamond.

Now they searched with system and care. Every corner which could harbor a fly was closely scrutinized. The bed was examined. Bureau-drawers were opened, and pulled entirely out, until the skeleton frame stood empty.

At one side of this, on a dusty ledge along which the drawer slides to its place, a small, flat bottle was found. It bore no label or mark of any kind, but, on holding it tilted between the eye and the light, a small quantity of colorless fluid could be seen in its lower angle. On removing the cork this fluid gave forth a strong odor of chloroform.

They searched again. In the uppermost drawer which had been removed from the bureau, in plain sight, lay an ivory-handled razor. On close inspection, made to ascertain if there was any blood on the blade, none was found, though there were stains which gave evidence that something had recently been wiped from its bright surface.

But this close inspection of the razor revealed another fact. One side of the handle had been partially split, and from the crack thus formed, right beside the iron rivet which held the blade in place, a small piece of ivory had dropped out — a piece no larger than an oat-seed. And when the man who made this discovery took from his purse the little bone-like chip which he had picked up in the opposite room, he found that it fitted the vacant space thus formed as accurately as ever a key fitted its lock. Even a little scalloped notch, hollowed out of the side of the tiny fragment, closely hugged the head of the rivet.

Now the search was pursued with redoubled zeal. Pictures were turned from the wall; the edges and corners of the carpet were palpated as carefully as though the room were being measured for a new one; the ashes in the grate were raked over; the register was lifted from its setting in the floor; the bed was turned inside out; the upholstery of the furniture was run over with the hand, and insinuating fingers crept into every crack and crevice. But all to no purpose.

The detectives reported their discoveries to the officer.

Now all interest centered in the one question: Where is Gordon Wright?

But the renewed search of the house was as fruitless as that which had been made an hour before. Then it was taken up outside, and at every station in the city the officers were directed to search for Gordon Wright.

At noon the coroner came and impanelled his jury of six. The body was viewed, the two rooms were examined, and witnesses called. Kenneth was summoned, and compelled to tell the story of the events of the preceding evening, from the time that the diamonds were exhibited, down to the moment when, at Gordon's request, he had left him alone in his room. Then he was allowed to retire. The detectives told the story of their important discoveries, and exhibited the silent witnesses of the crime.

At this moment there was a commotion in the room, and everyone knew — though no one could tell just how he came to know — that Gordon Wright had been found, and would now appear and be examined.

He entered, looking pale, but not excited. His morning's toilet had evidently received but slight attention, while his shoes bore marks of travel on the unpaved earth.

He was sworn, and questioned. He told his story with some show of emotion, but without hesitation.

As soon as Kenneth Hardy had left him alone in his room the night before, still suffering as he was from an intense headache, he took two morphine pills, part of a prescription which a physician had made for him when suffering from a similar attack several weeks before. It was not long before he became drowsy, and throwing himself on his bed, he was soon sound asleep.

How long he slept he did not know, for he had neglected to wind his watch, lower his gas, lock his door, or make any other preparation for the night.

Soon after awaking his headache returned with increased violence. As he had taken the last of his pills, he desired more. The noises in the street indicated that it was early morning. He got up, turned out his gas, locked his door, and, without meeting anyone, left the

house. On reaching the street he started for the Avenue, intending to take a 'bus which would carry him to a drug-store on Madison Square, where he had obtained his former supply. Arrived at the corner, he saw by the clock of a distant cathedral tower that it was a few minutes past five. No 'bus was in sight; he started to walk up-town, in order to meet one.

But the morning air, which had been freshened by a recent rain, so revived him that he already felt better, and his headache was fast passing off. On inquiry he learned that it would be two hours before the first 'bus would make its down trip. Still he walked on.

After passing the reservoir he turned to the west, and stopped at the first corner, undecided what to do. The quiet of the street below was broken only by the regular rattle of the rushing trains above his head. Attracted by this, he climbed the weary stair-way and entered a car which, for a moment, paused at the station. In the upper air his head felt still better, and even the tremulous motion of the train was soothing. Thus he was rapidly whirled through the streets, past the Park and over houses, until, high on the trestle,

the busy train seemed to bear him through space.

Finally it stopped above the water's edge, and he got out. He made his way to the westward and climbed a high bank in whose shoulder is buried the aqueduct which carries the city's water-supply. Here he came upon wild ravines, whose existence he had never before suspected. He climbed over logs and rocks and tangled under-brush, until he came to High Bridge, which he crossed, and there, in Westchester, wandered northward several miles along a quiet road, being drawn on by the feeling of relief which the country air produced.

Tired at last, but his headache gone, he turned and retraced his steps. At a station below the east end of High Bridge he took a train which rapidly carried him, between high stone walls, through cuts and tunnels, back to the heart of the city.

He walked from the depot to the hotel, and, on reaching the office below, received his first intelligence of the bloody tragedy of the night.

Of the articles found in his room, he denied all knowledge. The razor he admitted to be

his, but he was unable to account for its having been found in the condition reported. They might ask him a thousand questions, but he could give them no further intelligence.

This concluded the inquest.

The evening papers of that day contained a long account of the tragedy, with startling head-lines announcing a "Bloody Butchery at 'The Belmont'!" Then followed many particulars belonging to the affair, together with many that did not belong to it.

The account concluded by stating that the coroner's jury retired, — as coroner's juries generally do, — and that they brought in a verdict "in accordance with the facts," — as coroner's juries are apt to do.

But this was not all, for it stated that the jury, in their verdict, further recommended that "Gordon Wright be held for trial without bail."

CHAPTER X.

A SAD PARTING.

THE result of the investigation cast a deeper gloom upon those whose hearts were already over-burdened. That the loved son and brother should have been foully murdered, was cause enough for grief; but that their friend, yes, even their guest, should stand accused of the crime, was a shock which filled them with additional horror.

Kenneth was dumbfounded. He knew not what to say. He was loth to believe that his trusted friend was guilty of such a crime, and yet Gordon had been accused only after a thorough investigation on the part of those who were disinterested, and who were in full possession of the facts.

He felt that he was compelled to let matters take their course, for he could not himself interfere without appearing to defend his brother's murderer. Moreover, he possessed

no evidence whatever with which to controvert that already established. Indeed, his own testimony had seemed to implicate his former friend. With nothing which he could say, Kenneth preferred not to meet him.

But there was one who suffered most keenly. Helene, who, a few hours before, had unburdened her heart to Dora, now in turn was called upon to comfort Madge.

From the first moment Madge protested her belief in Gordon's innocence. When she heard the story of the morning her indignation exceeded her grief, and she warmly resented the imputation cast upon her lover.

Why was she so certain that Gordon did not commit the act?

Because she *knew* that he did not! That was sufficient. It satisfied her, and it should satisfy anyone. She would go to him at once and tell him so.

Helene, upon whom Madge depended more than anyone else, accompanied her to the room where Gordon, in charge of an officer, was temporarily confined.

Regardless of the formalities of the law, Madge would have rushed into the room had not the officer's arm detained her.

"You can't go in there, Miss!"

"But I must see Mr. Wright," said Madge.

"Relative of the prisoner?"

This last word struck Madge like a blow. It was its first application to Gordon's condition which she had heard, and suggested so much that it brought the tears to her eyes, as she hung her head and simply answered:

"No."

"O, I see!" said the man, more gently. "Well, I don't know as there's any objection," he added, opening the door for her to pass, Helene remaining outside.

Gordon was seated at a window, looking out. Madge rushed to him, threw her arms about his neck, and could not speak for crying. Gordon took her hand in his and tenderly pressed it to his lips.

"Why don't you speak to me, Gordon?" Madge finally asked.

"Do you believe it too?" he asked, looking up into her eyes.

"Believe it! Believe it!" cried Madge, in incredulous tones. "Oh! how can you think I would? I *know* it is not so!"

"O, well then, darling," said he, drawing

her head down upon his shoulder and kissing her, "you need not cry, for that is enough for me to know."

Madge looked up at him in surprise, to see him so calm, so different from his former self.

Understanding her bewilderment, Gordon said:

"Madge, you do not comprehend."

"No, I do not comprehend," repeated Madge.

"But you would if you could see it as I do."

"O, Gordon, I wish that I could do so! Can't you tell me?" she cried.

"Yes, I will. But you must be more calm, darling."

"O, I will be calm!" said she, again resting her head upon his shoulder. "Now I am quiet. Now tell me."

"Yes, dearest, I will try," said he, as he drew her more closely to him. "You must know," he began, "that it is as sad to me as it can be to anyone that this horrible thing should have happened, and that those who have been my friends should be so stricken — though I am not permitted to express to them the sympathy which I feel.

"But that its force should be visited upon

me, is most cruel. Had this occurred through any fault of mine, it would crush me completely. But, having nothing of which to accuse myself, I must rise above it!

"When my other misfortune, which my own carelessness invited, came upon me, it was hard to bear — I was so oppressed that every breath required an effort, and I struggled beneath a burden which was steadily crushing me. I would have welcomed death, had it come to my relief!

"But in this — being innocent, knowing that I am wronged — I feel so superior to it that it brings me less pain, than regret. Now I would not die for worlds! I *must* live!" he concluded, with a look of determination, and a tightened grasp of Madge's hand, which he held in his own.

Madge, who had listened with breathless interest to every word, raised her head, and smiling through the tears with which her eyes were still moist, exclaimed:

"O, I am so glad, Gordon, to hear you say this! It will help you to convince everyone, and then you will not — then they won't — then that will be all!" said she, avoiding those

words the very thought of which made her shudder.

"Yes, if all were like you, my darling, then that would be all!" said Gordon, stroking the hand which he held in his.

Madge looked at him as though to gather deeper meaning from his face.

"I find no fault with those who have taken action in this matter," he continued, in reply to her inquiring glance. "They could not have done otherwise. But I am at a loss to account for the discoveries which they have made. I have tried to study it out, but the more I try the more obscure it becomes," he said, knitting his brow as though to pursue the subject again. "But I must trust to time to clear it up, and I will get all the help that I can."

"Yes, and I will help you, too!" cried Madge.

Gordon could scarcely repress a sigh as the feeling came over him that perhaps, after all, others would be as impotent to help him as was this innocent and inexperienced girl. But not wishing to repress her enthusiasm or to dash her hopes, he said:

"I am sure, my darling, that you will do all

you can, and I shall be better able to act my part, for your sweet sake."

"And I, too, shall be inspired by your noble courage!" cried Madge, exultantly.

Gordon drew her head upon his shoulder, that she might not see the tears that started to his eyes. But the tears were not for himself!

"O, I feel so much relieved!" sighed Madge. "I expected to find you more down-cast than ever, and completely heart-broken. But when others know what I do, they will believe you too, and all will yet be well!"

"Yes," said Gordon, "let us hope that all will yet be well."

At this moment there was a tap at the door. The officer put his head in, and said:

"It's time, Miss."

"What does he mean?" asked Madge.

"You must go now, darling," answered Gordon.

"Go?" exclaimed Madge, anxiously. "Can't I stay with you? I don't want to leave you yet," she said, clinging to his arm.

Gordon found that his courage was to suffer a trying demand all too soon.

"No, Madge," said he tenderly, rising from

his seat; "they have come for me, and it will not do for you to go there."

"Go there!" cried Madge, repeating his words in tones of alarm. "You do not mean — they will not —— "

"Yes, you may as well know it now, Madge; I must go with them to the prison."

Madge uttered a cry of pain, threw her arms about Gordon's neck, and sobbed as though her heart would break. Gordon supported her with one arm, while he gently stroked her hair, and the tears gathered in his own eyes. For some minutes they stood thus, until Madge's grief had partially subsided.

The officer again looked in. He then quickly ushered Helene into the room, whispering a few words to her as she passed, while he withdrew.

Helene put her arm about Madge, and softly said:

"Don't you think that you had better come with me, dear?"

Gently unclasping her arms, which closely encircled his neck, Gordon folded Madge to his breast, kissed her passionately, and then the

weeping girl permitted herself to be slowly led from the room.

But before going, Helene managed to take Gordon's hand a moment and say:

"I think just as Madge does, Gordon."

The poor fellow replied with a glance full of gratitude, and then, as they left him, sighed wearily, and returned to his seat by the window.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATION.

After Madge had parted from Gordon she was conducted by Helene to her own room, where she threw herself upon the bed, and the pillow was soon wet with her tears.

Ever since their school-days there had existed between these two girls a warm affection, and now Madge turned to Helene for that sympathy which is so grateful to the over-burdened heart —that sweet solace which blesses the one who gives and the one who receives, without which life would be robbed of half its tenderness, and sorrow would consume like a flame.

To this demand Helene readily responded, for, though the knowledge of her own disappointment was to be confined to Dora and herself, yet she found relief in trying to comfort Madge.

Mrs. Hardy, upon whom the blow of Austin's sudden and horrible death had fallen with

greater force than upon any other one, was completely prostrated by the shock, and for many days it required the most assiduous care on the part of those about her, and the most skillful attention on the part of her physician, to avert what threatened to become a serious, if not a fatal illness. Thus care and anxiety for the living were added to grief and regret for the dead.

All devoted themselves with tireless energy to the heart-broken mother, and with such success that their efforts were finally rewarded by the appearance of a reaction which promised a sure, though a slow convalescence.

But even after Mrs. Hardy had progressed far toward recovery, and had begun to take an interest in affairs, Gordon Wright's name was never mentioned in her presence, and thus the exact nature of her feelings toward him remained unknown.

Mrs. Hardy knew nothing as yet of the altered relations between Helene and Kenneth.

These two were, of necessity, brought into frequent contact, but, although there was much that was embarrassing in their positions, they

took care that it should not become apparent to others.

Kenneth was deeply pained, but in the shock which his brother's death had occasioned his mingled emotions found expression more in grief at the latter's tragic end, than in the melancholy which his own private sorrow would have caused.

Helene, on her part, was naturally more reserved than ever before. And yet no one would have known from her manner that such alienation as had occurred between Kenneth and herself, was affecting her. Nor would they, even had her feelings not been partially shrouded by that grief which she shared in common with them all, for she had fallen back upon woman's ever-ready refuge — her pride. Kenneth was grieved; Helene was not only grieved, she was stung.

At any other time, or under other circumstances, explanations might have followed, or interested parties have provided means of reconciliation; but now all were too deeply engrossed in the exciting events of the time to even notice that the relations of these two were

changed. Thus the possibilities of an understanding became more and more remote.

Thus the weeks went by, and the day set for Gordon's trial was rapidly approaching — the sooner because of his desire that there should be no extended delay. Once it had been postponed in order to take advantage of some new evidence which seemed to be at hand, but this proving delusive, at Gordon's urgent request the trial was set for as early a date as the court-calendar would permit.

Gordon still maintained the stoical attitude which he had assumed at the first, and yet he neglected no effort to obtain evidence which should be used in his defense.

A descriptive list of the stolen diamonds, made according to the schedule obtained at the custom-house, was published extensively, both at home and abroad. Men in various parts of the country were heard of who were making unusual display of diamonds, but on investigation each case admitted of satisfactory explanation. The police of all large cities were notified to closely watch pawn-shops for this class of goods, and jewelers all over the land were cautioned to take careful notice of

strangers offering diamonds for sale. But every effort of this kind was barren of result.

All the passengers who had arrived on the steamer with Austin that day had been traced and located. A closer watch was kept on all professional criminals known to be at large. All in vain!

Gordon declared that he would never be better prepared for the trial, and he begged that he might no longer be kept in suspense.

His counsel was of the best legal talent that the city afforded. He had not, however, a great reputation as a "criminal lawyer" — a term which must not be interpreted too literally — and yet he was a man of distinction in his profession, of high talents, and one who was able to cope with any adversary to whom he might be opposed, if he had on his side only a reasonable share of the law and the facts.

Mr. Tremaine had once been very tall, but a certain confidential manner which he possessed had made him stoop-shouldered, from a much-indulged habit of bending over in order to reach the ears of other people. In this attitude every communication was made with an

aspiration and an air of mystery strongly suggestive of the confessional.

In addressing a jury he would approach the rail, lean over, and while talking most earnestly to one whom he particularly desired to impress, he would rest his long forefinger on the man's knee, as though to convey conviction to his mind through the medium of his nether anatomy.

And it must be owned that he generally succeeded. Intensely earnest himself, when he brought others to his way of thinking it was by seeming to take them into his confidence — a species of flattery which seldom failed of its effect.

Nothing escaped his restless eye, and his active mind was quick to seize upon everything which came under his observation, which, if not made use of at the moment, was carefully laid away, to be had upon demand.

"We lawyers sometimes have to fight when we cannot see our way clearly," he said to Gordon on the occasion of the first visit which he paid him in his cell; "but I wish that some of the circumstances connected with this affair of yours could be more easily explained."

"I sincerely wish so myself," replied Gordon; "but I fear that I can give you no further assistance, since you are already in possession of all the facts which I have to offer."

"Yes — yes, so it seems," said Mr. Tremaine, thoughtfully.

"Whatever else there may be must come from other sources," added Gordon.

"Yes," repeated Mr. Tremaine, slowly. Then assuming his most confidential manner, he drew near to Gordon, and said:

"There is a defense, however, which I am sure could be made effective. Your previous disturbance of mind, your excitement that night, your strange headache, your wandering off aimlessly into the country, together with the history of a peculiar attack from which I am told you suffered last summer, afford ample grounds for it, and I am certain that I could clear you on the plea of — temporary insanity, you know?"

"No, never! I will not consent to it!" cried Gordon, springing to his feet. "Then it would certainly be thought that I committed the crime! And I would rather die protesting my

innocence, than to live as an alleged insane murderer. No, never!" he repeated.

"It offers us a certainty," persisted the lawyer, confident of his own abilities, and still hoping to persuade his client.

"Do not speak of it again!" exclaimed Gordon. "The attack to which you refer was nothing but a sunstroke, and I was never more sane in my life than I am at this very moment!" said he, straightening up and looking Mr. Tremaine full in the face.

"My God, man, I believe that you are innocent!" exclaimed the lawyer, also rising. "And that is half the battle — half the battle — and we'll win! Yes, sir, I am convinced that you are innocent," he repeated, as he shook Gordon's hand, and left him.

"I only wish that I were as sure of convincing those twelve men!" he muttered to himself, as he walked down the long, cell-lined corridor.

During the term of Gordon's imprisonment, Madge, always accompanied by Helene, visited him as frequently as possible. She was always hopeful, and would listen to no one who indulged in gloomy forebodings, or took any view

of the result which was not favorable to his acquittal.

While Gordon maintained the same imperturbable calm, and was successful in his effort not to give way, or to let his trouble overcome him, yet Madge's visits, though grateful to him, always saddened him, for he felt even more solicitude on her account than on his own. He had contemplated the affair in all its aspects, and was certain that he had sufficient fortitude to meet whatever might come; but he was not so sure of her powers, and, while he loved the girl as fondly as ever, he wished again and again that her young life — as fragrant as the flowers which she daily brought to his cell — might have been spared the sorrows which his unhappy lot had compelled her to share.

In the preparation for the trial which was made in Gordon's interest, it was hoped that some evidence might be obtained by ascertaining who had procured chloroform from adjacent pharmacies on the evening of the murder, and for this purpose a systematic investigation was entered upon.

The law requiring the registry, in a book kept for that purpose, of all sales of chloro-

form or other dangerous drugs, together with the name and residence of the purchaser, greatly facilitated this search. And also, since it was the long-established and universal custom for druggists to carefully preserve all physicians' prescriptions, it required but a short time for each one, when called upon, to give the desired information.

Beginning in the neighborhood of "The Belmont," all streets radiating from that point were canvassed, and, one by one, each store where chloroform could be obtained, was visited. It proved to be a long and tedious task, but, by the co-operation of a number of Gordon's personal friends, who volunteered to assist in the work, more rapid progress was made than had at first been deemed possible.

This search had been undertaken with faint hope of its leading to definite result, but there was at this time in Gordon's case so little out of which to construct a defense, that those who were working in his interest felt that they could afford to neglect nothing which gave even slight promise of success. The main hope which they indulged was that they might thereby succeed in discovering a clue which would lead

in some other direction, and thus lessen the weight of suspicion which rested upon Gordon.

Although, as a result of this effort, nothing had been found which pointed to other parties, at the same time it had failed to reveal anything which would implicate Gordon, and thus, as a piece of negative evidence, it was accepted as being in his favor.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIAL.

THE day of Gordon's trial arrived. The court-room was crowded with people drawn by that same power which fills parquette, and dress-circle, and balconies, when some mimic tragedy is to be enacted — a desire to witness the display of human passions.

These people wished to see a murderer as he appears when publicly accused. They wished to watch the play of his features, the shrug of his shoulders, the twitch of his fingers, and to see how he looks when brought face to face with his crime. They wished to have their own passions played upon, to be made to feel a sense of wonder, of horror, of cruelty, of revenge — of pity!

Impelled by motives far different from these, Madge was there, with Helene at her side, and these two had seats inside the bar. Kenneth and Mr. Howard, summoned as witnesses, were also in attendance.

The judge was on the bench, the prisoner in the dock, and the counsel suspiciously watching each other.

After much tedious delay, and the exhaustion of several special venires, they finally succeeded in finding twelve men sufficiently ignorant to act as jurors — men of very limited knowledge, and with no opinions worth mentioning.

The case was opened, and there was the usual amount of sparring between the opposing counsel, with more than the usual number of "objections" from Mr. Tremaine.

For the prosecution, the detectives testified to the facts which their researches had developed. The folded towel, the bottle, the broken-handled razor, and the single, uncut diamond were exhibited, and their histories given.

Each article was then passed from hand to hand, and inspected by each juror. And these mute witnesses were followed in their course by the eager eyes of the many people who crowded the court-room, as though at any moment some one of them might speak out and reveal the mystery which learned judge,

and learned counsel, and unlearned jury were there to fathom.

Then, by the aid of diagrams, the relations of the two rooms were shown and described, and this description was accompanied by such detail and iteration that every attentive listener became as familiar with the appearance and contents of each, as though they were to be put up at auction, and the people had come there to bid.

One cross-mark indicated the spot where the bit of ivory was found, another the hiding-place of the bottle, and a third the position of the tell-tale diamond. In one corner of the room a square figure indicated the location of the bed on which the body lay; and in the corresponding corner of the other, a similar square showed the location of that on which the prisoner had reclined that night. And the detectives gave, in ghastly detail, a description of the position and appearance of the silent occupant of the one, and, with similar attention to detail, a description of the unturned counterpane and depressed pillow of the other.

Then a chemist testified that he had, on the day of the inquest, examined a portion of the

lungs taken from the murdered man's body, and, by tests known to his art, had detected the presence of chloroform therein.

Next several physicians were called, who testified, in positive terms, that it was possible to overcome a person with chloroform while sleeping, so that the victim would pass unconsciously from the one sleep into the other, and, by pushing the drug and excluding air, into the sleep of death.

They also testified that the wound which had been made in the neck, even in the absence of chloroform, would have proved fatal. They were the more positive in this opinion, they said, since the gash, having been cut in the side of the neck, had severed blood-vessels which might have escaped had it been made in front.

Mr. Howard was next called upon to relate the particulars of his discovery of the body, and his use of a pass-key to open the murdered man's chamber-door, and the subsequent use of the same key to open the door of the prisoner's vacant room.

Then Kenneth, as being the one who had last seen the prisoner the night before the tragedy, was compelled to answer questions

which brought out an account of the visit to his room, and of his leaving him there, at the other's urgent request.

At this point Kenneth was asked whether or not, to his knowledge, the prisoner had lost twenty thousand dollars which had been entrusted to his keeping.

But before Kenneth could reply Mr. Tremaine sprang to his feet with a sharp "I object!" and in angry tones indignantly denounced this evident attempt on the part of the prosecution to prejudice his client's case.

The prosecutor, however, insisted that the question was a proper one, and appealed to the court to be permitted to state what he expected to prove thereby. The judge, in reply, directed him to proceed.

But, like a flash, again came the quick "I object!" of Mr. Tremaine. It was the prisoner's right, he claimed, to have the jury retire while the prosecution made their statement, and while its admissibility was being discussed. Otherwise, he said, the minds of the jury would be liable to be influenced by the statement of alleged facts, even though the court should decide to exclude them from the evidence.

Yielding to Mr. Tremaine's just demand, the judge directed the jurymen to be placed in charge of a court-bailiff, who escorted them to their room.

Then the prosecutor went on to explain that his question, to be followed by others, was designed to elicit facts which would reveal a special motive for the crime. He would, if permitted, show that at the time of the tragedy the prisoner was suffering great mental anxiety occasioned by the fact that a package containing twenty thousand dollars in money, of which he had custody, had suddenly disappeared from his possession. He would show that upon the question of the restitution of this money to its owners, depended all his hopes of future success in life. He would show, further, that on the evening of the murder, in the presence of the prisoner and others, the murdered man had taken from about his waist a belt containing a large number of valuable diamonds, which he exhibited to the company. He would prove that, on witnessing this display and learning that a single one of the diamonds had a value of twenty thousand dollars, the prisoner had become much agitated,

and immediately made a sudden headache the excuse for retiring from the room.

All this he was prepared to prove by credible witnesses, and, since it had an important and direct bearing on the case, as establishing a special motive for the crime, he claimed that it should be admitted in evidence.

After much tedious argument, for and against, by the respective counsel, the judge, leaning his elbow on the desk before him, slowly passed his hand several times across his forehead, and then, looking up, gave his decision.

Evidence as to the loss of the twenty thousand dollars, he said, could not be received, since it would, in effect, put the prisoner on trial not only for the crime of murder, but also for larceny of the money — the injustice of which was too apparent to call for discussion. Nor, in his opinion, had it been shown that the affair constituted an element of the crime charged in the indictment, within the meaning of the law. Therefore, it would be excluded.

But, on the other hand, evidence as to events which had occurred at the time that the deceased exhibited the diamonds, was admissible, since it would show knowledge on the part of

the prisoner that he had such valuables in his possession, and that he carried them about his person.

The jury was then recalled, and the examination of Kenneth proceeded. Point by point, with damaging clearness, the history of that fatal evening was told, until the people learned, the judge learned, and, most important of all, the jury learned the story of the twenty-thousand-dollar diamond, together with all the circumstances attending its display.

Thus, though the prosecutor failed in his attempt to introduce evidence touching the loss of the twenty thousand dollars, still, he accomplished all that he had designed, since no one knew better than he that the very fact of the exclusion of this evidence would now, probably, have a more telling effect on the minds of the jury than even its admission would have done. By a method well known to the members of his profession, he had succeeded, before the jury left the court-room, in acquainting them with the fact that the prisoner had met with some such mysterious loss, and he was well aware that the natural inference in their minds would be that the excluded evidence must cover some-

thing very damaging to the character of the prisoner, otherwise his counsel would not have objected so strenuously to its introduction.

Thus did Mr. Tremaine find that a strong net-work of circumstantial evidence was being woven about his client, which it would require all his skill to unravel.

But in the very outset of the defense which he was now about to enter upon, he found himself seriously embarrassed. If he should bring witnesses to prove his client's previous good character, the prosecution would be entitled to a similar privilege, and in that way the story of the loss of the twenty thousand dollars, which he had just succeeded in excluding, would be introduced. The circumstances connected with that affair could, he knew, be so distorted to his client's disadvantage, as to more than destroy the effect of whatever he might be able to establish in his favor.

For a like reason — and in spite of protest — he also insisted that his client should not make use of his privilege of taking the stand in order to testify in his own behalf. His experience had taught him that even the truth, when unsupported, is not mighty enough to prevail

against a multitude of seemingly adverse facts. Therefore, he was compelled to abandon that which, under other circumstances, would have been the starting-point of his line of defense.

In lieu of this, he contented himself with showing the prisoner's early acquaintance with the deceased, and the friendship which had so long existed between him and the surviving brother.

And then the physician who, three wéeks before the night of the tragedy, had prescribed the pills for Gordon's headache, testified to that fact, and this was corroborated by the druggist who had furnished the medicine.

Then a piece of negative evidence was introduced. It had been shown that chloroform was the agent used in the commission of the crime for which the prisoner was on trial, and yet, notwithstanding the provisions of the law governing the sale of noxious drugs, a search of the records had failed to show that anyone answering to the name or description of the prisoner had purchased chloroform that night. The cross-examination, however, brought out the acknowledgment that the law in question was not always strictly observed.

Lastly the fact of Gordon's walk into the country was established by the testimony of several witnesses who had chanced to see him, and his return on the train by that of an acquaintance whom he met.

Then Mr. Tremaine made a strong appeal in behalf of his client.

He asked the jury if every act on the part of the accused, did not contradict the assumption of his guilt. After having successfully accomplished his work, would a murderer have left his room — a room, moreover, directly opposite the one in which his victim lay — to walk out of the house at such an unusual hour as inevitably to excite suspicion? Would such an one have gone away and left the object of his crime in one room, with the evidences of his guilt in the other? And would the guilty man, after finding himself in the free and open country, with jewels of priceless value in his possession, have deliberately returned and cast himself into the hands of the law?

The answer to all these questions was, No — a thousand times, No!

The more closely the actions of the prisoner were scanned, the more absurd and unfounded

did the accusation against him become. All the evidence pointed to the fact that this innocent man had been made the victim of some high priest of crime, far more skilled than he.

The jury had heard uncontroverted evidence to the effect that a gash in the side of the neck was more dangerous than one in front, and the reasons therefor. This fact was not generally known; hence, it was a method of assassination which especially characterized the work of experts in crime — those who were acquainted with all its dark secrets.

And yet they were asked to believe that this man, as unfamiliar with the methods of murderers as he was with the art of alchemy, had adopted it in an initial effort! The very accusation contradicted itself!

If this man committed the act with which he was charged, where did he obtain the necessary supply of chloroform? The most diligent search that it was possible to make — a search which had extended from river to river, and from the Park to the Battery — had failed to trace any to his possession.

What did this fact argue? Why, just what he claimed — that the crime was committed,

not by his client, but by some prowling burglar who would at all times have the drug in his possession, prepared for such an emergency as this.

Thus did evidence accumulate that the real criminal, in order to make good his escape, and to arrest all search in its inception, had made this innocent man his victim!

While the prisoner was in a deep sleep, induced by that soporific drug which perpetuates the name of the god of slumber, his door unguarded, the real murderer, first purloining this man's razor, had committed the act, and then deposited the tell-tale evidences of his crime where they would cast suspicion upon another. Then the guilty man made good his escape on that dark and rainy night, and before morning was, probably, many miles from the scene of his two great crimes — the one accomplished, and the other well planned. Alone, the murderer had accomplished the first, but twelve such intelligent men as they, would not, he was sure, lend their aid to the accomplishment of the second.

"And well may the real murderer feel secure," continued Mr. Tremaine, "if such cir-

cumstances as I have narrated are sufficient to convict my client. But they are not! Each one admits of such ready explanation that the entire structure upon which this false accusation is based, falls unsupported to the ground.

"I charge you, gentlemen, that you have nothing but circumstantial evidence upon which to convict my client — a possibility that I do not for a moment entertain!

"No one saw the prisoner commit this crime! You are in possession of no direct evidence that he is the guilty man! The only evidence of that character which, under any circumstances, it would be possible to present, would be the sworn testimony of someone who had seen him in the act — as you now see me, or the objects about you. Not only is such evidence entirely wanting, but that which is offered is wholly circumstantial, and unworthy of belief.

"And now I caution you not to commit that grave and fatal error, too often committed in the past, of convicting an innocent man on circumstantial evidence alone!

"Remember what a verdict of guilty in this case would mean. It would mean that you are

ready to believe — on circumstantial evidence alone — that this man, a stranger to crime, had cruelly murdered one whom he had known in youth, and one who was a brother of his most intimate friend; it would mean that you believe — on circumstantial evidence alone — that, regardless of the nature of his act, he had heartlessly robbed a widowed mother of her eldest-born, who, after many years of absence, had returned to her arms; it would mean that you believe — on circumstantial evidence alone — that he had deliberately stained his soul with a crime which would, in an instant, plunge the household in which he was a guest, into the profoundest depths of woe, and surround him by the black-robed forms of those who, weeping, mourned the cruel loss of son and brother and friend!

"Why, that this man could commit such a foul crime, is so preposterous, so far passes belief, as scarcely to call for that contradiction which it bears upon its face! The crime would consist in pronouncing him guilty — on circumstantial evidence alone!

"I caution you," concluded Mr. Tremaine, "not to visit punishment upon an innocent

man, simply because the guilty one has not yet been apprehended! You cannot afford to invite the remorse which some day will surely be yours. Justice can wait — injustice alone is impatient!"

A murmur ran through the court-room: "He will go free!" the murmur said.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NOVICE IN ASSASSINATION.

THROUGHOUT the three long hours during which Mr. Tremaine had spoken, he directed the greater part of his appeal to a juryman whose seat was at the extreme end of the front row, next to the wall — a young man with light hair.

While this individual had, undoubtedly, attained his majority, yet he was quite youthful in his appearance, with a sloping forehead, a small, retreating chin, and a little lachrymose nose which seemed to be engaged in constant apology for occupying the most prominent position among all his features.

But Mr. Tremaine faced this young man for almost two hours. He would recede, run his hands through his hair, and then approach him again, lean over the rail, place a finger on his knee, and address earnest words to him in such confidential tones that it would seem that he

was oblivious of the fact that there were eleven other jurors, a judge, counsel, and a room full of spectators, all anxious to catch his every word. But, notwithstanding there were so many more intelligent-looking men on the jury, Mr. Tremaine devoted the greater part of his appeal to the young man with the light hair.

When Mr. Tremaine had concluded, all listened eagerly to hear what the attorney for the prosecution would have to say.

After having flattered the jury to his heart's content, he reviewed the evidence point by point. The history of the events connected with the display of the diamonds was rehearsed, and the story was made to include the prisoner's retirement to his room that night, accompanied by the brother of the murdered man.

Then, in imagination, it was followed through that rainy night, and even to the moment at which he was speaking.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury," said he, "if it is shown that on the evening of the murder the prisoner witnessed a display of rich jewels, made by the murdered man; if it is shown that he was the only male member of the company present, who was not at the same

time a member of that man's family; if it is shown that he exhibited great agitation on having a twenty-thousand-dollar diamond placed in his hand, and at once made a sudden headache an excuse for retiring; if it is shown that he was anxious to be left alone in his own room, which was directly opposite the one occupied by the possessor of all that wealth; if it is shown that the same key fitted both their doors; if it is shown that he crept unseen from the house early the following morning, and if, in his absence, the owner of the diamonds, which have disappeared, is discovered dead in his bed and the implements of murder are found secreted in this man's vacant room — What are you asked to conclude?"

After an impressive pause, he shouted:

"Why, that some other man committed the crime!"

Then in lower, hissing tones:

"As well might you be asked to believe that to-morrow came yesterday!

"On such quicksands of improbability as these are you asked to let this man go free, in order that someone may start on a still-hunt over the world to find a mythical murderer.

"But the facts in this case point too plainly in another direction!

"On the evening of the murder, when the prisoner saw such a display of wealth, he quickly conceived the idea that he must possess it, and a well-feigned headache gave him excuse to retire in order to make his preparations.

"A physician and a druggist have testified that the man once had such a headache, and took for it certain pills, but they failed to explain why it was that he set out that morning with the ostensible purpose of obtaining a fresh supply of pills from a store which lay a mile to the south, while he started off and traveled ten miles in the opposite direction. It is possible, however, for us to surmise that he did so in order to seek some lonesome spot where he might secrete the fruits of his crime.

"To that point his scheme was a success. But then he made his fatal mistake — he tarried too long! Had he hastened back to the scene of the night — had he entered his room, disordered his bed, and by morning's light himself discovered the tell-tale diamond, no discovery would have followed, and this murder

would have remained one of the unsolved mysteries of crime. But by prolonging his walk into the country, in order, by his seeming indifference, to avert suspicion from himself, he pursued the best possible course to insure his certain detection.

"We are asked why the records do not reveal where the prisoner, if he committed this act, obtained his supply of chloroform. That is not necessary! It has been shown that the law governing the sale of noxious drugs is more honored in the breach than in the observance. It is not at all difficult for any person presenting a respectable appearance, and telling a plausible story, to obtain chloroform, or other drugs, from almost any pharmacy in this city. Like other merchants, druggists aim to make all the sales they can.

"Or, who knows that it was necessary for him to purchase chloroform at all? — who knows but that he already had it in his possession? He had morphine. Why not chloroform? Indeed, there are a score of ways in which to account for his possession of this adjunct to his crime!

"Now what are you offered in argument

to sweep away this multitude of damaging facts, which point so unmistakably and unerringly to the guilt of the accused?

"Why, that someone as familiar with the methods of murderers as an astronomer is with the pathways of the stars, committed the act, and then threw the suspicion upon him. And what support is there for this baseless hypothesis? Simply the fact that the wound was made in the side of the neck, where it severed blood-vessels, instead of in front, where it would have severed the wind-pipe. And we are informed that this method is supposed to be the peculiar property of those most experienced and most accomplished in crime, and therefore that it could not have been known to a novice.

"But if this proves anything, it proves too much, for in this man's hands the right way would be the wrong way, and the expert's method would become the bungler's device.

"There is, then, no foundation for the claim that the prisoner is falsely accused of a crime belonging to some more skillful assassin, who made his escape that rainy night. The work bears every evidence to the contrary.

"It bears evidence that when he went to the

sleeping man's room, provided with a deadly drug, he also carried his razor, prepared for bloody work should his victim unexpectedly waken; that he opened the door by means of a key which also fitted his own; that, having accomplished his purpose, to make doubly sure — needless precaution! — he drew the blade across his victim's pulseless neck; that, in cleansing it of blood, the ivory handle was fractured, and, unknown to him, a small bit fell to the floor; that, on returning to his own room, he deposited the razor in its accustomed place, but, before taking his hasty departure for the country, there to secrete the stolen diamonds, one small crystal fell from the plethoric belt, and was left to tell you and me that there is a decree, issued by a higher Court than this, which says that such crime shall not go undetected, or its perpetrator go unpunished!

"This is the evidence which the act too plainly bears, while all facts are opposed to any other interpretation.

"No experienced robber would have left such traces as those which mark this case. No one familiar with criminal methods would have killed his victim, when it was not necessary to

the accomplishment of the robbery. Such an one would have known that search for a robber is never so active as that which is made for a murderer — that interested parties alone pursue the one, while the whole world is in league to hunt the other down. No, no one who ever committed such an act before, had a hand in this! It was the first effort of one who was suddenly prompted to a new career of crime!

"But what would this man have done had he been the accomplished villain supposed, instead of the bungling butcher he has shown himself to be?

"He would have remained in his room until the usual hour for rising in the morning; he would have been among the first on the spot, ready to deplore the sad accident; he would have thrown his door wide open, and invited investigation at the earliest suggestion; he would have been able to account for his time that night in a reasonable manner; he would have remained on the scene until suspicion was well fastened upon another, and his conviction almost assured — and then, and not till then, would he have felt free to take his departure.

"But instead of acting such a part, what

has this man done? Precisely what would be expected of a novice in assassination and a bungler in crime! Thus do all the facts connected with this horrible affair point unerringly to the guilt of the accused.

"Nothing is more fallible than human testimony, whereas a score of facts, all pointing in one direction, afford evidence of the strongest character.

"If some man had appeared before you here who testified to having seen this act committed, how should we know that he was speaking the truth? How should we know that some ancient grudge for fancied wrong had not induced him to testify falsely?—or that some interested party had not paid him for so doing?—or that in the dim and uncertain light he had not mistaken the identity of the man? All these things have happened, and all are liable to happen again.

"But this bottle cannot lie! This crystal brought from far-off mine cannot lie! This broken-handled razor and bit of ivory that fits like mosaic in its place, cannot lie! The excited action, the passing headache, the unoccu-

pied bed, the morning trip to dark ravines — they cannot lie!

"No; the silent witness that they bear is far more certain than that of living man!

"It is too true, as we have been told, that the victim was the brother of this man's friend. I wish it were not so! It makes the crime so much the more heinous. To take the life of a friendless stranger is inhuman, but to kill the brother of a friend who trusts and shelters one, reaches the limit of all that is hideous in crime. The man who commits such an act can go no further — he can only repeat!

"Gentlemen," said the lawyer, impressively, "if you feel like taking the responsibility of turning such a dangerous man loose upon society, you may do so — *but I would not!*" he concluded with a flourish.

A murmur ran through the court-room: "It looks bad for the prisoner!" the murmur said.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VERDICT.

After the judge's charge, the jury retired. Many lingered until dusk, but Madge and Helene returned to Mrs. Hardy and Dora, leaving Kenneth, who promised to follow as soon as there was any news to convey.

Finally, on hearing that there was little prospect of the jury's coming to an agreement, Kenneth started; but, on making his way through the crowd of people at the door, he heard something of a more definite character, which caused him to proceed with the slow step of one who bears unwelcome tidings.

Had Kenneth waited a moment longer, he would have borne still another message, for he had scarcely departed when it was announced that the jury was ready with its verdict.

The judge, who had temporarily retired to an ante-room, resumed his seat, and the jurymen filed in and stood in their places.

"He is guilty," was written on every face, and "Guilty!" the verdict said.

It had taken just three hours for a young man with light hair to change his mind.

Gordon sat silent, as though five hundred pairs of eyes were not turned to see him reward their gaze by some outward show of emotion.

The usual question was put to him, and all wondered if such an emotionless man would have anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced upon him.

Yes, he rises! The prisoner will speak!

Oblivious to all surroundings — as though they two were the only ones present — Gordon addressed his earnest words to the judge.

"There is in my breast, sir," said he, "little hope that I shall be able to add to that which has already been said in my behalf.

"Though I set little value on my life, my honor I do cherish — above all else — and he would be unworthy indeed, who, to protect his honor, would not speak a word.

"But why ask me to speak, and not tell me what to say? It is not for me to do that in which this court — in its effort to vindicate the offended majesty of the law — has failed! I

cannot name the man with whose dark crime I stand unjustly charged!

"Nothing is left me but to repeat once more the story of that fatal night, as I know it.

"It has been told that, afflicted by a pain which had visited me before, I retired to my room that night, and that my friend, the dead man's brother, went with me. In the kindness of his heart — for my comfort — there he would have staid; but, unwilling to keep him from his brother, so recently returned, I urged him to leave me. When he had gone, I sought relief from pain in that which had brought relief before, and the dreamless sleep which followed was most welcome.

"Of what then took place I was unconscious. The evil one who entered my chamber did me more grievous wrong than he did him whose life he took; if he was cruel to that man, he was far more cruel to me!

"When I awoke, the pain returned with increased violence. I was glad that my sleep had been so long, for it had brought me to the beginning of another day, and I at once set out to obtain a new supply of the drug that made me sleep. But, refreshed by the morn-

ing air, I wandered on and on, until I found myself in the open country.

"All this has been told before, and, though there is much which seems to contradict it, it is all true.

"I have no wish to disguise the fact that for months I had been weighed down, and my spirit broken, by a misfortune, the nature of which my friends understood, and of which they held me guiltless, but which strangers might think reflected on my honesty, and enemies could easily misconstrue.

"But, in the quiet of the country, refreshed by the crisp air of that November morning, I felt a life and vigor which inspired me with renewed courage. I resolved to return, throw off the incubus which had been silently weighing me down, and enter upon a struggle which should redeem my entire future.

"I hastened back and reached the scene of the night, weary and hungry, but full of hope, only to find that one whom I may call my friend, had been robbed of his life, while I had been robbed of that to save which I would gladly lay down my life!

"You know the rest. My misfortunes, and

another's cruelty, have so molded circumstances as to make it appear that I am the author of another's crime. It is now too late to rebel. I must endure what I cannot escape, and I am aware that death is the penalty which I must expect to pay.

"But hope has not yet entirely deserted me.

"No one labors for the dead, but for the living, there is inspiration to effort. So, if I live, my champion may yet appear. Almost friendless as I am, the chance seems small, but for that chance I desire to live.

"I might refer to other ties, to tender ties, that tempt me to cling to life — but I refrain. I will not ask your pity — it is justice that I seek, not mercy!

"Life and vindication are due me. But, helpless as I am, if it so please your honor, I will accept life, in order that when vindication comes, as come it must, it may not be — too late!"

He ceased speaking. There were tears in many eyes, but none in his. Gazing steadily at the judge, he stood erect, with arms folded on his breast, and only bowed his head when,

in solemn tones, his sentence was slowly pronounced.

Mr. Howard lingered to catch the last word, and then hastily followed Kenneth.

At home Madge, seated in Mrs. Hardy's room with Helene and Dora, was anxiously awaiting the intelligence which should confirm her hopes or fears. Helene had tried, as well as she could, to comfort her. They discussed the trial over and over again, and were inclined to take a more and more favorable view of Gordon's chances each successive time, until they almost convinced themselves that there could be but one verdict, and that the one which they themselves would have rendered, had they had it to do.

Thus the hours passed slowly, and it was almost dark when Kenneth returned. As he entered the room Madge, who was sitting at Helene's side, started up. She asked no question — it was not necessary — her whole being expressed her state of anxious expectancy.

"There is little yet," said Kenneth; "only a report that the jury cannot agree — one man holds out."

"Holds out! How?" cried Madge

"That he is not guilty."

"Only *one* that he is *not* guilty! O, how can those other men think that he did it!" she cried, sinking down at Helene's side.

At this moment Mr. Howard appeared at the door, beckoned to Kenneth, and whispered a few words in his ear.

Madge, leaning forward, cried:

"Tell me! I can bear it! O, tell me — tell me!"

"The one man —" said Kenneth, slowly.

"Agrees with the eleven?"

"Yes."

"Tell me the rest!"

"Prison for life."

Turning, Madge threw herself upon Helene's neck, and burst into a paroxysm of grief.

"Poor Madge!" said Helene, caressing her. "I should think it would kill you that he should suffer this, believing him, as you do, to be unjustly condemned!"

"No!" cried Madge, suddenly rising to her full height, and dashing the tears from her eyes. "It would kill me if I thought him *justly* condemned!"

It was a sad night for all. It was sad for

the condemned man, who spent it alone in his cell. It was sad for the mother and son, whose former friend had been convicted of killing the one whom they held most dear. It was sad for Madge. And yet she shed no tears — her pillow was dry — but, with wide-open eyes, she restlessly tossed throughout the long night.

CHAPTER XV.

A GRAVE DUTY.

THE next morning, at as early an hour as possible, Madge sought an interview with Kenneth. She found him alone in the parlor, standing before the fireplace above which hung his father's portrait. But he was not gazing at that — his arms were resting on the edge of the marble mantel, and his head was bowed upon his hands. As Madge entered, he suddenly looked up.

"Kenneth," said she, abruptly, "the wrong man was condemned yesterday."

"I would like to believe so myself," said Kenneth, now turning toward her, "and if I were sure of it, there is nothing I would not do to aid in establishing the fact. But what can I do?"

"I know who did it!" continued Madge, disregarding his question, and evidently pursuing a purpose.

"You know!" exclaimed Kenneth, in astonishment.

"I thought it out last night."

"What do you mean, Madge?" asked Kenneth, with a puzzled look.

"It was Philip Arnold!" said she.

"Philip Arnold! How do you know?"

"Because he acted just as that lawyer said the accomplished villain would!"

Kenneth made no reply. He seated himself and regarded Madge with a look of wonder.

"Don't you see?" she continued. "He was among the first to appear the next morning — he early threw his room open to inspection — he accounted for his time — he made many suggestions — he over-stayed the day which he had set for leaving New York — but, as soon as another was imprisoned, charged with his crime, he left."

For a few moments Kenneth was silent. Then he said, slowly:

"Madge, it may be that you are right."

"I *know* that I am right!" cried Madge.

"And he may be the man," continued Kenneth, thoughtfully.

"He *is* the man! And he must be arrested!"

"But how?" asked Kenneth, now thoroughly aroused by this practical suggestion.

"Learn where he is. Let someone follow him — get near him — watch him; he must betray himself sooner or later!"

"If that could only be done!"

"O, if I were a man, I would do it!" exclaimed Madge, as she walked rapidly across the room and back.

Kenneth, impetuous — never needing to be led when he could himself see the way — was deeply moved by Madge's earnest words.

"Madge!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, "I have all the time been convinced against my will, and now I believe you are right. I will not rest until Austin's murder is avenged, and Gordon is freed from prison!"

"O, Kenneth, I am so thankful!" cried Madge, her eyes filling with tears. "And you will send someone to follow him?"

"I will go myself!"

"You?" cried Madge, her face aglow with excitement. "You will go?"

"Yes, I will go!"

"And you will start at once?" she asked, in her eager joy.

"I must have a little time to consider," replied Kenneth, already beginning to realize how much the project involved, and to ponder upon the necessary steps.

"O, yes, of course!" said Madge, now partially regaining her composure.

"But I shall not be long, Madge. Give me to-day to make my plans."

"Yes," said Madge, giving earnest attention to his every word.

"And meanwhile," he continued, "we must take care that the matter does not become generally known, lest our plans should be interfered with."

"O, certainly! No one outside of our own circle must know it!" said Madge.

Kenneth looked at her clenched hands and tightly-compressed lips, evidences of the mental excitement under which she was laboring.

"O, I know you can be trusted to keep the secret," said he. "But you must be careful, Madge, not to let your anxiety create too severe a strain upon you."

"I think you may trust me in that matter, also," replied Madge, as Kenneth left her, in order to enter upon his task.

When evening came, Kenneth, complaining of a severe headache, sought his mother's room at an earlier hour than usual, to bid her good-night. Seating himself in a large chair before the open fire, for a time he silently gazed at the glowing coals in the grate.

"Kenneth," said Mrs. Hardy, approaching his side, and with her hand brushing his hair from off his forehead, "tell me about it."

"That is hardly necessary, is it, mother?" said Kenneth, looking up into her face.

"Yes, for I can read no more. I thought that you had something on your mind, and it seems that I am right."

"Yes, mother," said Kenneth, rising and giving her his seat, while he took another by her side. "I was wondering how I should tell you; but you have anticipated me."

"Well?" said Mrs. Hardy, inquiringly.

Even with this encouragement, Kenneth scarcely knew how to begin. Since his mother's illness nothing had been said in her presence on the subject of the tragedy, or of Gordon's connection with it. That this was in accordance with her wishes, her own silence plainly

indicated. Therefore it was with some hesitation that Kenneth opened the subject.

"I am not satisfied, mother," said he, "with the result of the trial."

For some minutes Mrs. Hardy was silent. Finally, when she spoke, it was with apparent effort.

"It is only recently, Kenneth," said she, "that I have been able to think calmly upon this subject. Indeed, I can scarcely do so now. But I know that you would not refer to it without good reason, and I will listen."

"Do you not think," began Kenneth again, "that there may, after all, have been a mistake — about — "

"About Gordon Wright?" said Mrs. Hardy, helping him out.

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"You know how he explains it?"

"Yes, I have read all the papers."

"And may he not be right?"

Again Mrs. Hardy paused for some moments before she replied.

"It was a long time, Kenneth," said she, at length, "before any doubt of Gordon's guilt

ever entered my mind. It filled me with horror to think that he did it, but the evidence seemed to be so clear that I never stopped to question, and all the bitterness of my nature came to the surface. Knowing that I could not speak calmly, I preferred to say nothing. But of late Madge's unshaken faith has caused me sometimes to wonder if it were possible that a grave mistake had been made."

"And if there is possibility of such a mistake, ought I not to make effort to correct it?" asked Kenneth.

"No," said Mrs, Hardy, slowly; "when we are so entirely in the dark, I do not see that you are called upon to take action. That belongs to others."

"But, mother," persisted Kenneth, "supposing I actually knew that Gordon is suffering punishment which belongs to another — would it not then my duty to save him?"

"Most certainly!" responded Mrs. Hardy, her instinct of justice quickly asserting itself. "But in the absence of such knowledge, we must wait."

"But, mother, I think I have that knowledge now!"

Mrs. Hardy looked at Kenneth in dumb amazement. The latter, without waiting for her to speak, rapidly told her the nature of his suspicions, the facts upon which they were founded, and at whose suggestion he had taken the matter up. Then he added:

"I have felt unusually weary to-day, and scarcely able to drag myself about, and yet I have spent the time in seeking those with whom that man had dealings while he was here in the city. But they could tell me little beyond the facts of their business transactions with him in that real-estate matter, and, also, that when he left this country it was with the intention of spending the winter somewhere in southern Europe — at Nice, it is thought.

"Two facts which may be of greater importance, however, I have learned. One gentleman told me that the man was very fond of gambling, though he was what is called a light player. But, what is still more remarkable, Madge learned from Helene, what heretofore has not been generally known, that Philip Arnold met Austin in our parlor, immediately after his arrival that afternoon."

"But did not Austin tell us that he never met Mr. Arnold?"

"Yes, I think he did; but that renders it all the more mysterious."

"Why did not Helene think of this before?"

"Why should she? There has never been the slightest thing to suggest it. It was recalled to her mind only by Madge's tale of her suspicions."

"And is that the extent of your discoveries?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Mrs. Hardy, with the conservatism which belongs to age, "all this may mean something, and it may mean nothing; but, at the best, it is mere suspicion."

"That is true, mother, but it is a suspicion upon which I must act."

"I cannot see in what way you are to do so?"

"Why," said Kenneth, in a tone which seemed to imply that no explanation is necessary when a thing is so plain, "I must follow him!"

"Follow him? Impossible! Why, you can never do that!"

"But, mother, if it should prove to be necessary?"

"How can it be necessary? What could you ever accomplish?"

"All that anyone could!" replied Kenneth. "I believe that Madge is right — if closely watched, he must betray himself sooner or later. I feel that I have a double duty to perform — a duty to a friend who, while he was under our roof, while he was entitled to my protection, was stricken by a blow compared to which death would be a blessing. But there is a second reason. I could not rest if I thought that the man who took Austin's life was free and unpunished, and it belongs to me to avenge my brother's death! Am I not right, mother?"

"There would be a grave duty resting upon you, my son, if we knew this to be true," she slowly replied.

"I cannot wait to know. I must act! I will do as Austin said — I will devote his gift to that object on which my life is bent."

Mrs. Hardy looked up in astonishment, and exclaimed:

"Why, Kenneth, but you know what Austin meant?"

Kenneth hesitated painfully before he said slowly, and in a hoarse voice:

"Mother, what Austin meant and you are thinking about, can never be."

"Can never be?" she cried, a vague fear for the happiness of her only remaining son entering her mind. "O, Kenneth, you do not mean that! It cannot be true!"

"Yes, mother, it is true — too true!"

"And I have not been told before?"

"No, mother. It happened at a time when your own grief was more than you could bear, and to add to it would have been cruel," said Kenneth, tenderly.

"But now —"

"But now," interrupted Kenneth, "you would, I am sure, spare both Helene and myself any explanation, if you knew that there was a mistake — if you knew that the place I thought was mine belonged, not to me, but — to — to — O, mother, do not ask me to say more!"

"One word, Kenneth; you do not mean —"

"Yes, — Austin!"

Wholly unprepared for such a discovery as this, Mrs. Hardy sank back in her chair with the dazed look of one momentarily blinded

by a flash of lightning. Thus she remained for some time. Kenneth, too, was silent. Finally, rising, he stood by his mother's side, leaned over and kissed her, and said good-night. To this Mrs. Hardy only responded in an absent manner, while Kenneth, in sheer physical weakness, supporting himself by the furniture that he passed, quietly left the room.

Mrs. Hardy still sat gazing into the fire. She had been very willing to listen to Kenneth's appeal not to pursue the subject. Could it be that he had in any way gained knowledge of what had passed between Austin and herself on that fatal night? She could not conceive it to be possible! Indeed, she knew, from subsequent events, that Kenneth had not seen his brother after she herself had bade him good-night. And yet, how else account for what had happened? She was anxious to learn more, but she did not dare question him more closely on the subject, even had he not pleaded for silence, lest she should reveal that which her dead son had charged her to keep inviolate. After all, she was no nearer a solution. She could only wait.

Rousing herself from her revery, Mrs. Hardy

looked about as though expecting to find Kenneth still with her. But, recollecting his quiet leave-taking, she went to his room, which was next to her own, to say good-night once more; she entered, in response to his "come in," and found that he had already retired. After turning up the gas she knelt beside his low bed.

"I came to say good-night again, Kenneth."

"I was so tired, mother," said Kenneth, "that I could not stay longer. I have had a wretched headache all day."

His mother stroked his head with her hand.

"Your forehead is very hot, Kenneth," said she. "Let me send for the doctor?"

"O, no, mother, that is not necessary. I shall be all right in the morning. Your cold hand makes it feel better already."

Acting on this suggestion Mrs. Hardy moistened a handkerchief with cold water and bound it over Kenneth's forehead.

"How does that feel?" she asked.

"Very grateful indeed!" he replied.

After saying a final good-night Mrs. Hardy darkened the room, and, going out, quietly closed the door.

In her own chamber she sat a long time

gazing at the fire, before retiring. But her thoughts carried her over the same ground again and again, and left her as undecided as ever.

The next morning, since Kenneth delayed longer than usual in making his appearance, his mother went to his door and knocked. Receiving no reply, she entered. The room was just as she had left it the night before — the curtains drawn, and the gas turned low. Kenneth had not risen. He was still in bed, and his eyes were red and shining, while both hands were clasped to his head, which he was rolling from side to side on his pillow. In answer to his mother's anxious inquiry, he only called for water.

Now thoroughly alarmed, Mrs. Hardy rang for a servant, whom she hastily dispatched for the doctor with a message begging him to come immediately. Then she knelt at Kenneth's bedside, and as she bathed his burning forehead, her eyes were dimmed with tears.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FAVORED GUEST.

It was at this juncture that my connection with the affairs belonging to this history began. I had but recently returned from Paris, where, for two years, I had been pursuing my studies in medicine, more particularly for the purpose of taking advantage of the instruction of the great Charcot, whose lectures on the diseases of the nervous system, at *L'Ecole de Médecine*, are attended by students from all parts of the world.

On my return from abroad I had spent several months in Cleveland, where my parents lived, and had then come to New York with the view of making it my permanent home.

During the first three years of my student-life, spent at the Fairview Medical College, New York, I contrasted the evidently lucrative practices of my professors — who lived in elegant mansions on the avenues, and were driven

to the college in fine carriages — with the laborious and poorly-paid life of old Doctor Douglas, who used to come to my father's farm in western Pennsylvania, when any of us were sick. I then determined that nothing but a metropolitan practice would ever satisfy me. When I chose medicine as my profession, my father, whose stock-farm had several years before become a valuable oil-farm, promised me the best advantages that could be procured, and also that he would see me well started in my professional career.

While in Paris I had made the acquaintance of Kenneth Hardy. Although he was attending *L'Ecole Centrale*, in the *Quartier du Temple*, while the *Quartier Latin* was my study-ground, yet, actuated by that social spirit which exists among all classes of American students congregated at a foreign capital, we came into frequent intercourse with each other, and I then promised him that when next I had occasion to stop in New York I would take pleasure in making his father's house, as it was at that time, my headquarters. Agreeably to this promise I had, on my arrival in the city the

day before, ordered my trunks sent to "The Belmont."

I was already aware of the tragic death of Kenneth's brother, but knew little of the particulars. These I became familiar with, however, before I had been in the house an hour.

Kenneth gave me a very kind welcome, prompted, I have no doubt, by that peculiar and warm interest which one always feels in those whom one has met in a strange land, or when far from home.

After lunch Kenneth took me to their own private parlor, where I had the pleasure of meeting his mother, as well as his cousin Dora and the other young ladies, all of whom added their words of welcome. I also spent the evening with the family, and, as we became still better acquainted, I was made to feel that I was a favored guest of the house.

After retiring to my room that night I sat up until a late hour engaged in writing a long letter to those at home, in which I related my first day's experience in the city. I told of meeting with my former Parisian acquaintance, and of the cordial greeting which he had given me; I described every member of the family,

and gave an account of their sad bereavement, its tragic nature, and of the many exciting events connected with the scenes through which they had so recently passed. I also described "The Belmont," and concluded by saying that I had almost decided to make it my permanent residence.

In this decision I was confirmed much sooner than I anticipated when I wrote the words.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

On the return of the messenger who had been sent to summon the doctor for Kenneth, the reply was brought that he could not come before ten o'clock.

What a mistake people make in always sending word for the doctor to *come immediately*, whether "milady" has the heartburn, or the baby has spasms!

If a doctor receives twenty orders in the course of the day, each one says, "Come immediately." Not being able to appear in two different places at one and the same time, it is physically impossible for him to do this; and equally impossible is it that he should single out that one case among the many in which the necessity for haste really exists. Hence he learns to disregard the urgent words, and to treat all summons alike, since all convey a similar demand.

Thus it was that this doctor sent back word that he would "come at ten o'clock," and thus it was that I received a request to come down and see Mr. Hardy, who was sick.

Hastily finishing my toilet, I went to his chamber. His mother told me the circumstances which had induced her to call me, hoping that I might be able to do something for Kenneth pending the arrival of their family physician.

A few words of inquiry enabled me to gather a brief history. His condition was one with which I was familiar, having seen similar cases in hospital experience, and listened to the details of its description from the lips of my professors many times. The insidious nature of the onset of his attack — announcing itself by fugitive pains, and a growing tired feeling — together with his blood-shot eyes, intense headache, hot skin and rapid pulse, told me that he was threatened with brain-fever. My conclusion, however, I did not reveal, preferring that Mrs. Hardy's own family physician should make the announcement. But I set to work to do what the case demanded.

I sent to a neighboring pharmacy to have a

prescription filled, and called for other necessary articles. As a result of the measures adopted, the patient soon fell into a restless sleep. With the exception of a short time spent at breakfast, I remained at his bedside, administering the customary medicines, and keeping applications of ice to his head.

In my conversation with Mrs. Hardy the name of her physician had not been mentioned, and therefore I was both pleased and surprised when, at half-past ten, I met Dr. Gough, one of my former instructors at Fairview College.

After a hasty though cordial greeting, the doctor made a careful examination of the patient. He was already familiar with the fact that Kenneth had been laboring under great mental strain, incident to the death of his brother, and the trial which followed. After supplementing this knowledge with that which his examination revealed, he took me aside and asked me what I thought of the case. I told him the conclusion at which I had arrived, and also related what I had done — a course which met with his entire approval.

Dr. Gough then told Mrs. Hardy that Kenneth was suffering from brain-fever; that he

would not venture to predict how mild a course it might pursue, but, at the best, it would probably be two or three weeks before he would reach convalescence. He commended my treatment, and added that he would take it as a favor if, in view of his numerous engagements, she would let me act as junior physician, while he would assume the responsibility of the case, and visit the patient as often as necessary. With this request Mrs. Hardy readily complied.

This arrangement — though a complete surprise — was a very satisfactory one to me, and thus on my second day in the city I found myself already entering upon the practice of my profession.

Dr. Gough directed that the patient be immediately transferred to a rear room on an upper floor, far removed from the noises of the street. Further than this he made no change in the treatment already begun.

The days which followed were full of the most painful anxiety. As the fever progressed the patient's symptoms became correspondingly severe. At night he was restless, and often wildly delirious, while even during the day his

mind was never clear. In his wanderings he would call piteously for his brother. Dr. Gough's wisdom in having him removed to a quiet part of the house was early confirmed, for the slightest sound disturbed him, and his extreme sensitiveness to light made it necessary to keep the room constantly darkened.

Mrs. Hardy, whose anxiety was extreme, seldom left her son's bedside, and she would have spent her entire time there had not Dora Macy insisted upon relieving her. But this niece, who seemed to be a very quiet, and, to me, an uninteresting girl, possessed her aunt's entire confidence, and thus was permitted to assist in the care of her cousin, at whose illness she showed great solicitude.

Soon, however, the employment of a trained nurse made it unnecessary for either of them to devote much time to the demands of the sick-room.

But there were two other members of this household whose interest in the patient was scarcely exceeded by that of the mother and the cousin. Helene Evarts and Madge Irving both watched the progress of the case with feverish anxiety.

The latter showed a restless excitement, as though some event of great importance hung upon the patient's recovery. Regularly, twice each day, she would ask my opinion of the case, with a remarkable exactness as to detail. After obtaining permission, she read the nurse's reports as carefully as I did myself, and it was not long before she was able to estimate the value of each symptom. Soon she asked questions about pulse and temperature, delirium and coma, with an intelligent understanding which quite surprised me, but was accounted for by her explaining that she had read all that could be found on the subject of brain-fever in every cyclopædia and family doctor-book that she could procure. She had also added to her knowledge facts concerning the average percentage of recoveries — a piece of intelligence which did not add much to her comfort or her hopes. Finding that she already understood the subject so well, I freely answered all her questions, and thus she kept herself well informed as to the progress of the case.

Helene's interest was as great as that which Madge displayed, but, evidently, of quite another character. If the one could be said to

be mental, then that of the other was emotional. There was on her part, however, an attempt — not entirely successful — to suppress all outward manifestation of feeling. Occasionally, when she knew that the patient was asleep or unconscious, she would steal quietly into the sick-room, and ask Mrs. Hardy or the nurse if there was not something which she could do to help them. And on those rare occasions when her request led to the performance of some slight duty, she could not conceal her satisfaction.

For information regarding the progress of the case Helene never came to me, as Madge did, but depended entirely upon Dora, who, as she continued to share with her aunt the light duties which the nurse left to them, was a frequent visitor to the sick-room.

Early in the second week of Kenneth's illness I was surprised one day to find that Madge Irving did not pay her accustomed midday visit to the sick-room. From morning until afternoon both she and Helene Evarts were absent — evidently away from home. This was repeated several days.

During the time of Kenneth's illness I had

met the three girls at the lunch-table almost daily, but Dora Macy and myself were now left its sole occupants. With Helene and Madge I already felt myself to be on terms of friendship, and I now hoped to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered, to become better acquainted with Dora. But before I had made any great degree of progress in this direction the other girls resumed their attendance at the table, and Dora remained to me as much of a mystery as ever.

As Kenneth's fever approached its tenth day, it became apparent that a crisis was near at hand. For several days there had been no active delirium, but the patient lay in a stupor most of the time, and he was weak and exhausted. The applications of ice to his head had for some time been discontinued, and increased effort was made to administer food and stimulants.

When Dr. Gough made his visit that evening the patient was in a deep comatose sleep. After having finished his examination, he told me that he thought the system had almost reached its limits of endurance, and that, unless the coma became less profound and the

pulse improved by morning, he would have grave fears for the result.

That night I did not retire at all, but spent most of the time at the patient's bedside, watching his breathing, and making frequent records of his pulse.

Shortly after midnight I was sure that I could detect a change in the character of the pulse — it was less rapid, and somewhat stronger. Taking advantage of a slight restlessness on the part of the patient, the nurse managed to get him to swallow a small amount of stimulant, after which he dropped asleep again. But I could now see that his breathing was quieter.

Again, toward morning, he became restless, opened his eyes, muttered a few unintelligible words, and fell into a more natural sleep, while the pulse showed additional signs of improvement.

Satisfied with the change which had taken place, I started to my room to get a little much-needed rest. In passing Madge Irving's door she heard me, and stepped into the hall-way. She too had been up all that night. As I stopped, she said:

"I see it in your face?"

"Yes; I think the change has come."

"And the pulse?"

"Ninety-eight, and stronger."

"Then he will get well!" she said.

"Yes, he should get well," I replied.

Dr. Gough made his morning visit earlier than usual. After having examined the patient, he said:

"Yes, the crisis has passed, and with great care he will soon be convalescent. But the slightest accident, or any undue mental excitement, may be followed by a fatal relapse. We must be extremely cautious!"

There was little danger of accidents, however, under Miss Volk's judicious care, and from that day forward we had the satisfaction of seeing our patient make steady progress toward recovery.

But, O, how changed he was! Two short weeks had transformed him. He was hollow-eyed, emaciated, and the loss of what little hair the scissors had spared left him as bald as a baby. He could scarcely recognize the reflection of his own face in a mirror.

One morning not long after this, as I entered the sick-room, the nurse called me aside, and said:

"Doctor, did you know that he is partially paralyzed?"

On my confessing ignorance of the fact, she continued:

"Yes, I discovered it only an hour ago, as he was trying for the first time to turn upon his side. He has very little power over his right leg."

I soon confirmed this discovery, and when Dr. Gough came, together we made a careful examination.

The paralysis was not complete, and, in extent, was confined to the single extremity in which it had first been discovered. Dr. Gough said that the chances were all in favor of his final recovery, although it would probably be a long time before he regained complete control of the affected limb.

One week from that day, for the first time, Kenneth sat up in a large chair. In another week we had removed him to his own room on the second floor, where now he received the congratulations of his friends, and the air was filled with the perfume of sweet flowers which covered the stand at his side.

And yet, had he died, the flowers would have been sent to cover his coffin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A COUNCIL OF TWO.

It was a happy household which welcomed the one who had passed beneath the shadow. Kenneth's mother could not do enough to show her joy over his recovery. Madge acted as one might who had heard the news of some great victory, while Helene and Dora showed a less demonstrative satisfaction, but, nevertheless, one which was deep and sincere.

To me the favorable issue of the case was particularly gratifying, and I continued my residence at "The Belmont," which I now looked upon as being my permanent home.

Kenneth steadily improved, and was slowly regaining the use of the paralyzed limb. During the period of his convalescence he and I spent much time together, for, in addition to the ties which would naturally be created by our recent relations as physician and patient, we had our experiences of student-life in Paris, full of pleasant reminiscences.

One afternoon, when all the others were away, Kenneth and I sat together on an upper balcony, over-hanging the street. It was now early spring-time, and during the short hours when the sun's rays were most direct this indulgence was permitted. For the first time since his illness Kenneth now spoke to me of his brother, and gave me the full history of his death. The account included his brother's depature for Africa, now almost six years past, and what he knew of his life while there. Then he told the story of his return, of that first evening, and the fatal night which followed — of the morning's discovery, the arrest of Gordon Wright, the trial, and its result. And then he brought his account down to the day preceding his illness — told of his determination to follow the supposed culprit, and how he had been prompted thereto by convictions based upon Madge Irving's suspicions.

Now I understood the nature of that girl's marked and peculiar interest in his recovery.

"But," I exclaimed, "you do not still intend to pursue that purpose?"

"Most certainly I do!" he said, emphatically.

"When it is so important that you should rest?"

"Could I rest, believing this to be true?"

Not wishing to encourage him in any rash course, I made no reply.

"Put yourself in my place," said he.

This, in imagination, I could readily do, and I at once saw his strong motive for action.

"Even had I been undecided before," he continued, "I would now no longer hesitate."

"Is the urgency greater?" I asked.

"If there is no greater urgency, there is greater reason, for my suspicions have recently received additional confirmation."

"What, not since your illness?"

"Yes, since my illness; though it is the intelligence of something which occurred during that time."

"I do not understand."

"Of course you do not! But you will when I explain. I must begin, however, by telling you that this Miss Irving is a very remarkable girl."

"Your information comes too late! I made that discovery while you were ill."

"Oh! There is, then, something which I do not understand!" said Kenneth, smiling.

"You may easily do so when I tell you that the manner in which she watched the progress of your case would have done credit to the physician extraordinary to her majesty the Queen, if she and the entire royal family were down with a fever."

"And you did not know what it meant?"

"I failed to comprehend its significance at the time, but now I can see that, since she knew your intention of prosecuting this search, she was estimating the chances of your recovery."

"Not that alone," replied Kenneth, "for at the same time she was estimating the chances of my death."

"Ah! You are better informed than I am."

"Yes, she told me the whole story last evening. But it is growing cool out here; come into my room and I will tell you all about it."

When we were again comfortably seated, Kenneth began:

"Knowing that no other person would have the strong motive for action which I possess, as soon as she realized the possibility of a fatal

issue in my case, she immediately set about providing for such a contingency."

"O," said I, "it must have been when she learned about the average percentage of recoveries?"

"Yes, that was the time."

"She disappeared for several days following that."

"Yes. Her effort was to procure stronger and more positive evidence pointing to this man Arnold, evidence which might serve to convince those who would be less easily satified than I was."

"Yes, I can see its importance."

"With that end in view she determined to make further effort to discover, if possible, where the chloroform came from. Soon after the crime was committed this matter was pretty well canvassed, but, since the prosecution in Gordon Wright's trial proceeded on the theory that at a late hour of the night he conceived his intention of committing the act, the defense attempted to show that he could not then have obtained the necessary chloroform; or, that if he had done so, the records should reveal it. With that view of the case the search

was, of course, confined to the city. But in the light of Miss Irving's suspicions, it has another aspect. As we have since learned, this man Arnold met my brother in the afternoon, soon after his arrival. We do not know what then took place, but if Philip Arnold committed the act now attributed to Gordon Wright, he would have had, as you may see, a very much longer time to devote to the purpose of procuring chloroform, and would, therefore, have been able to go to some spot remote from the scene of his intended crime."

"Yes, that is clear enough."

"Well, Miss Irving acted on that supposition. Accompanied by Miss Evarts, she spent several days in seeking someone who would enter into her view of the case, and assist her in her efforts. She called upon those who had undertaken the former search of the kind. But at this time their interest was not so keen as that which they had displayed before Gordon's trial and conviction. By persistent effort, however, she found one who agreed to employ a trusty man in the search.

"The result of the investigation was that this man, soon after he began his labors, came

one day upon a small drug-store, not far from the Hoboken ferry, where he learned from the German clerk in attendance, that on the very day in question, as shown by the sales-book, a stranger had purchased of him three ounces of chloroform.

"The clerk remembered the circumstances attending this particular sale. It was just after his supper-hour — about seven or eight o'clock. He was alone in the store at the time, when a buggy stopped at the edge of the walk, opposite the door. Accustomed as he was to waiting upon physicians who would drive up in just that way, he ran out, and the occupant of the buggy called upon him for three ounces of chloroform. On being told that it could not be had without a prescription, the stranger said that he was a physician himself, and, if necessary, would write one. He asked the clerk, however, to hasten with the drug. On receiving this a few moments later, instead of a prescription, he handed the clerk a dollar, said he did not care for the change, and rapidly drove off."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Did the clerk give a description of the man?"

"No. It was threatening rain, the buggy-top was raised, and the man's face was never out of shadow."

"Then what is there about this incident to make it of value to you?"

"The hour! It occurred at the very hour — I may say, at the only hour — which would seem to connect it with the man Arnold."

"Did not the bottle in which the clerk dispensed the chloroform, have lettering blown in the glass?"

"Yes. But could not its contents afterwards have been transferred to a plain vial, procured elsewhere?"

"O, certainly! But even with the explanation which you offer, I cannot see that your case is materially strengthened."

"Not when considered in connection with all the other circumstances?"

"Well, hardly. The affair admits too readily of its legitimate interpretation."

"In what way?"

"Why, there would be nothing remarkable in a physician's procuring chloroform in the

manner described, even, in his haste, to the occasional sacrifice of an extra half-dollar."

"Well, that is the professional view of it. You are the most conservative fellow that I ever knew! However, no additional evidence was needed to strengthen my convictions, and, fortunately, my recovery renders unnecessary any further search of this character."

"Then you are still determined to seek this man?"

"I am! And I shall start as soon as you say that my condition will permit."

"But what do you expect to accomplish? I do not see that you are any nearer your final object, even if you succeed in finding him."

"Madge Irving says that, if closely watched, he must sooner or later betray himself, and I believe that she is right. In some way, I don't know how, I shall get near him — he shall not move without my seeing, or speak without my hearing. I shall get so close to him that I shall hear his every heart-beat, I shall hear the blood course through his veins — I shall hear him think!" cried Kenneth, becoming more and more excited.

I was really impressed by his earnest and

graphic language, but felt compelled to caution him against undue excitement.

"I will be guided by you," said he. "But, as my physician, I shall also expect you, as soon as possible, to aid in bringing me to a state of health which shall permit my carrying out my purpose. Will you do it?—will you aid me in this matter?"

"Yes," I replied, "I will help you by every means in my power."

"Good!" said Kenneth. "I will count on you!"

. . . .

That afternoon, on his last rounds, the postman brought, among other mail-matter for me, the latest copy of the *Journal de Médecine de Paris*, which I was accustomed to receive regularly. In the evening, seated alone by my fire, I opened the journal and began to run over its contents. I became particularly interested in an article by Dr. Gustave LeBaron, of Paris, giving an account of two cases of accidental poisoning by excessive doses of Haschisch. This was a subject with which I was already somewhat familiar, since it was directly in the line of my studies in nervous

diseases. But my attention was especially attracted by these words:

"*Furthermore, I would suggest the medico-legal question whether the condition that may thus be produced by Haschisch, may not be utilized in certain criminal cases, to extract confessions from persons suspected of crime, and thus avoid grave judicial errors.*"

"Yes, why not?" I asked myself, as the possibilities involved in Dr. LeBaron's suggestion dawned upon me.

I sought further light upon the subject. Among my books I had a small work by Richet, of Paris, on "*Les Poisons de l'Intelligence.*" Among other drugs it treated of Haschisch. I read in order to obtain confirmation. I found it in abundance!

What opportunities for the detection of crime did not Haschisch afford! Why, if this man whom Kenneth suspected could once be brought under its influence, he could, in spite of himself, be made to reveal the innermost secrets of his soul; yes, even to confess a murder, had he ever committed one!

But, how vain to think of it! The man would never be fool enough to take the drug

voluntarily, and there was no law which could compel him to do so. Hence, the subject might as well be dismissed from serious consideration.

The following afternoon Kenneth and I were out riding together. As we were driving slowly in a quiet part of the Park, I took from my pocket the copy of the journal which I had received the previous day, and, opening to the article which had so interested me, handed the paper to him, simply asking him to read it.

Kenneth read without a word, until he reached the lines which had attracted my attention. Then he dropped the paper, clapped me on the shoulder, and shouted, "Bravo!" so suddenly as to startle the horse and cause him to break into a trot.

"What ails you?" I cried.

"You have solved the problem! We will do it!"

With his characteristic quickness he had discerned the use to which it was proposed to put the drug, and, with his usual impetuosity, he had instantly decided upon its practical application, even going so far as to include me in the scheme. All this he had done while I was

still pondering over the question of its practicability, after having had a night and a day in which to consider.

"Do you mean that you intend to try it?"

"With your help, yes."

"With my help?"

"Certainly! I can work it up to a certain point, but this medical part of the detective business requires the services of someone who is familiar with the use of — of — what do you call it?"

"Haschisch."

"Of Haschisch," he continued. "I will run him down, you drug him, and there you are!" said he, picking up the journal, which had fallen to the bottom of the buggy.

But, knowing that the accomplishment of such an undertaking involved much more than was contained in Kenneth's expression of it in a dozen words, I asked time to consider.

However, in the course of our long drive we discussed the matter seriously, and, as a result, I agreed that if he would cross the water first, and find his man, and if then there appeared to be any promise of our being able to put the

experiment to the test, I would join him and make the attempt.

Practically, Kenneth engaged my services as a detective — an adventure to which I was not averse, providing I could be of any real service.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MONETARY CONGRESS.

AFTER having determined upon his course, as was characteristic, Kenneth let but little time stand between thought and action. It was not long before he was ready to start upon his voyage. He was now so far recovered that the degree of lameness which remained caused him but slight inconvenience.

His mother, as might be expected, was loth to have him go, but she became more reconciled on learning that I would join him in case of necessity. Madge, on the other hand, was as anxious to see him depart as a seaman's intended bride might be to witness her absent lover's return, and by her study of time and tide she succeeded in getting him to take a boat which would land him in Liverpool one day earlier than that on which he had intended sailing.

We all kept our own counsel, leaving others to think that the voyage was made solely in the

interest of Kenneth's health, a plan which Dr. Gough readily and innocently approved when appealed to for his sanction.

From the time of the receipt of Kenneth's first letter, written on his arrival in Liverpool, I was in constant communication with him.

Acting on the information which he had gained touching Arnold's original destination, Kenneth went directly to France. After pausing one night in Paris, he continued his journey to Nice — that fair city of the sea where the gay and the idle of two continents gather to bask in the sunshine and breathe the soft air.

Here his search began in earnest. And what a search! Among the thousands of strangers gathered from all parts of the world, how was he to single out one particular man?

But he had come to Nice for that purpose, and he set to work systematically to accomplish it. At each of its twenty monster hotels he pursued his inquiries. But only those who have ever attempted to obtain information out of the usual order at a Nicean hotel, can appreciate the nature of the difficulties which he now encountered. Had all been in league to keep him in ignorance of the object of his

search, they could not have thrown more obstacles in his way. Still, he persisted, and, as a result, satisfied himself that no person bearing the name of Philip Arnold was at that time a guest at any of the principal hotels.

But, what if Arnold was residing in Nice under an assumed name? In that event the method of search which he had pursued, would, of necessity, accomplish nothing. He decided, therefore, to seek among the crowds of people, and take the chance of discovering him by that means.

Engaged in this seemingly hopeless task, Kenneth spent several days. One fact favored him, provided Arnold was still in the city — it was growing late in the season, the swallows had already flown northward, and Nice was fast thinning of its swarm of winter visitors.

Kenneth visited the *cafés*, the clubs, the theatres — every place in which he could find new faces to scan. On the upper side of the broad *Promenade des Anglais*, he observed those who came and went about its numerous villas; on its seaward side he watched those who wandered among its olive-groves, and its trellised vines of rose and jasmine, while the

continuous stream of carriages flowing between, he kept under constant scrutiny. He saw several faces that he recognized, but not the important one.

At noon of the third day of this discouraging search, in order to escape from the blistering heat of the needle-like rays of the sun, Kenneth entered a *café* whose windows overlooked the sea. There he seated himself, and called for some ices. He felt almost like giving up in despair, for, if he failed at Nice, what chance would he have of finding one obscure individual, with all Europe — or, it might be, all the world — as his hunting-ground? The prospect was barren indeed, and unbroken by any index to point the way.

He was still determined, however, not to abandon his purpose until the last resource was exhausted. If necessary, he would extend his search even to Arnold's former home in South Africa — something might be learned there. But first he wished to make every effort short of this.

The immediate question which confronted him was — What should he do next?

"*Allez vous à Monte Carlo, ce soir?*"

Kenneth looked up quickly. The words were addressed to him by a gentleman who had just entered. But, on meeting Kenneth's gaze, he begged ten thousand pardons, explained his mistake, and walked to another part of the *café*, where he entered into conversation with one who, in general figure, bore some resemblance to Kenneth.

But after the man had gone, Kenneth, drumming with his fingers on the table while listlessly gazing out upon the sea, slowly repeated the question several times to himself.

"*Allez vous à Monte Carlo ce soir — ce soir — à Monte Carlo — allez vous — Monte Carlo* — what better place in all the world to find him than at Monte Carlo?"

Kenneth hastily returned to his hotel and made preparations to spend the evening at Monte Carlo.

During his stay in Nice Kenneth had heard Monte Carlo frequently mentioned, and had seen many people going and returning, but not until he had exhausted the initial field of his search, and the question had been directly put, did it occur to him that there were peculiar

reasons why Monte Carlo should be his next objective point.

At four o'clock his train left the city, plunged through the darkness of the tunnel which pierces the rocky headland of the *Tête-de-chien*, sped rapidly over the iron track which skirts the sea and the mountains, passed the castle-crowned heights of Monaco, and in forty minutes set him down at Monte Carlo.

He was too intent upon the serious business which had brought him, to stop to admire the beauties of the fairy-land which he had entered.

He made his way directly to the Casino, mounted its stately steps, passed its marble portal between swinging glass doors, and obtained admission to the *salon-de-jeu*. There, for a moment, he paused to survey the scene. The gorgeous Moorish hall was filled with the soft glow of many mellow-tinted lights. Five hundred eager people, in a dozen different groups, hid from view as many tables.

Kenneth stepped up to the group nearest the door, raised himself on tiptoe, peered over the shoulders of those who encircled the table, and there, directly opposite him, closely watching

its red and black squares, sat the man whom he had come four thousand miles to see!

Kenneth glanced a second time, to note his position. It was near the upper end of the table; on one side of him sat a substantial-looking German matron, bedecked with costly, though cumbersome, jewelry; on the other was a little old Frenchman with piercing gray eyes.

Kenneth withdrew, left the hall, passed through the corridor and out into the open air. It was now the dusk of evening, and he sought a quiet spot, remote from the passing people. It was scarcely five hours since, in Nice, he had asked himself what he should do next. In that short time he had accomplished the first great object of his journey — and yet the question now confronted him again!

He pondered long upon it, and finally concluded that he must ascertain where the man lived, how he spent his time when not at the gambling-tables, and who his associates were, if he had any. Then future action would be determined by what all this revealed. He himself had little fear of recognition, provided Arnold had no opportunity to look him full in

the face, and he would take care that this did not occur. Still, knowing that it would be unwise to in any way expose himself, he determined to avoid too close contact with Arnold, but, at a distance, to cautiously follow him to his lodgings after the close of the game.

In accordance with this plan he deferred returning to the Casino until a late hour, when, he hoped, he would have but a short time to wait before Arnold would leave for the night.

Now, as he strolled about the grounds, he could not but be attracted by the entrancing beauty of the scene.

The background held majestic mountains, against which rose the marble walls of the turreted Casino. About, played jeweled fountains, while below stretched lawns and terraces, and groves of orange and of citron trees, and graceful palms with leaves uplifted and penciled against the sky. Beyond the farthest terrace a sheer wall of rock dropped to the water's edge, where the azure sea spread out to meet the overhanging blue. The perfumed air was fragrant with the breath of many flowers, while soft strains of distant music mingled with the nearer sound of rippling waters. Thus art

and nature were combined to charm both ear and eye.

What wonder that the world came here to indulge its deadliest passion! Surely, no fairer robes were ever thrown about the form of Vice!

Here Kenneth lingered until it was time to return to the Casino. At eleven o'clock, a half-hour before the games would close, he was again in the *salon*, peering over the shoulders of the people who, standing three deep, surrounded the inner line seated at the table. Arnold was not there. In the seat which he had occupied, next the little old man, was a young girl, busily staking and losing *napoleons*. He scanned all the other faces, and then those at all the tables in the room — first the *roulette*, and then the more aristocratic *trente-et-quarante*. He visited the other *salon-de-jeu*, and there continued his search. Arnold was nowhere to be seen.

But he felt no discouragement on that account — he would visit Monte Carlo again the next day, and, after finding his man, take care not to lose track of him a second time.

Kenneth took the next train back to Nice,

and left the crowd of eager players pitting their nerves against the laws of chance.

The next morning he made an early start and was at Monte Carlo a little before noon, just in time to hear the *croupiers* call out, before twirling the rapid wheel, "*Messieurs, faites votre jeu!*"

The chairs were all filled, but at this hour there were fewer people standing about the early-comers who had secured the seats. Therefore Kenneth paused only long enough to observe that Arnold was not in the place which he had occupied the day before, though the little old man with the piercing gray eyes had been more prompt, and sat there, intently watching the melting piles of gold.

But after spending an hour in restlessly wandering about the corridor, and watching the incessant stream of people passing in and out, he returned to the first *salon-de-jeu*. The stifling atmosphere of the room would have told him that the games now had their usual patronage, had not the gathered groups revealed the fact.

As he had done several times before, again he peered over the shoulders of the people.

The seat which Arnold had occupied now held a young man who, evidently, was just learning the game, for he would occasionally lean to one side and ask a question of the little old man — who still sat next — and the latter would indicate a spot on the table, numbered thirteen, where the young man would deposit a *louis*, only to see the *croupier*, in half a minute, rake it in with his wooden cue. Once he won, and received back thirty-five fold. Then the young man looked pleased, but the old man frowned down his impulse to smile.

For some time Kenneth watched the young man's varying fortune, and then strolled off to continue elsewhere his discouraging search. He paid little attention to what was going on about him. He cared not for the turn of the wheel, the click of the ball, or whether it came black or red; he cared not that on every side fortunes were being lost — and sometimes won. It did not interest him to know that the week before last one young man gained thirty thousand *francs;* or that another, the week before that, shot himself, down by the cliff. He cared only to catch sight again of

the man whom he had lost. But he now began to fear that his search might prove vain.

No face in either of the two immense halls escaped his observation. This was no light task, for the motley crowd looked as though every nation of the earth had sent envoys to this monetary congress, and that each had adopted diamonds as the insignia of rank.

He saw many Americans, who freely threw their money into the bank's capacious maw. Then there were English, French and Russian, and, most numerous of all, stolid Germans, who, with facial muscles far beneath the surface, expressed emotion only with their eyes.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST STEP.

ALTHOUGH Kenneth looked eagerly everywhere, yet he was impelled again and again to return to the spot where he had once seen Arnold, and where he felt that he would see him again, if at all. Perhaps he might come later—it was then only dinner-time.

In passing this table for the twentieth time, Kenneth paused to look. Someone else was in the young man's place, and the little old man was just rising from his chair, which was quickly taken by one who had stood in its rear. Kenneth watched the little old man, and followed him as he passed out.

In the corridor he approached him. He asked pardon for thus addressing a stranger, but, having recently come to the Casino, and being ignorant of the nature of the game, he desired to ask a few questions. Would the little old man be pleased to give him some slight instruction?

Oui! Oui! Certainement! Of course the little old man would! He would be only too happy!

And he did so. With great volubility, and with many expressive shrugs of the shoulders, he rattled away, emphasizing each important point by lifting his brows, and striking with his finger the palm of his opposite hand, until Kenneth became familiar with all the intricacies of the game.

Then the little old man told him that he could help him to find a seat; and he could do even more than that — he could tell him a lucky number! He had told many people lucky numbers, on which fortunes had been won!

And then, in insinuating tones, the little old man begged that *monsieur* would have the goodness to grant him the temporary loan of five *louis*. It was a trifling request to make — *monsieur* would receive it again in a few hours — the favor would be gladly reciprocated at any future time — and — and — would *monsieur?*

Yes, "*monsieur*" thought that he would.

The little old man stepped from foot to foot

—he smiled, he snapped his eyes, he thrust his hands to the bottom of his empty pockets, withdrew them, and rubbed them palm to palm. The little old man seemed to be intensely eager to secure the promised loan!

But when it was proposed that first the two should dine together, the little old man seemed to be just as eager for that.

Kenneth took his new acquaintance to the elegant *café* of the *Hôtel de Paris*, on the left of the Casino, where no expense was spared upon the meal. And when the little old man was not eating, he was talking.

Yes, he knew Monte Carlo right well! For many years he had there seen money lost and won.

O, yes, 'twas true, he must admit, that people mostly lost, but that was because they did not know the secrets of the game! But he had learned its secrets, and knew all the lucky numbers, and he would show *monsieur*, that very night, what his number would do for him. Five years ago he told a man to play *thirteen*, and in seven days he carried off eighty thousand *francs!* And a handsome purse was his reward for giving the lucky shot.

Yes, he knew many people, and he had seen many come and go. All winter long a Polish count had played the season through; and a certain German baroness had not missed a day. Then a countryman of his, from Paris, was as regular as the clock. He would point out all these people to *monsieur*, at the tables where they played.

Did he know the man who sat next to him, on the left, last night?

L'Americain? Oui! He also was *un habitué*, and he had often watched him play. But, like all the other people, he had not learned the secret of the game. With the money that he had, he should bet more heavily! He acted strange! When he had luck, he played both night and day; but when luck ran out, he would go away — no one knew where — and stay for many days. Then he would return and play again. But that was wrong. When luck runs out, double your bets! That was the true secret of the game.

Where was that man now?

Eh! Who could say? For many days he had seen him play with splendid luck, but yesterday — he lost all day! That was enough!

Where he had gone, maybe at Monaco they could tell. There, at the *Beau Rivage*, he had seen him many times.

Kenneth was now as eager to be gone as the little old man had been to obtain the five *louis*. He looked at his watch. The next train would start in thirty minutes. He arose from the table and handed his companion the promised gold. The latter clasped the money tightly in his hand and hastened to the Casino. Kenneth followed him and saw him stop at the nearest table — the one at which he had first observed him. There was no vacant chair, but, making his way between those who lined the outer edge, he leaned over and placed one *louis* on number thirteen. In thirty seconds this was gone. On the same spot he deposited another, and another, and when the *croupier* had raked the last one in the little old man straightened up, thrust his hands into his empty pockets, but kept his gaze intently fixed upon number thirteen!

Kenneth reached the station just in time to step aboard the train. The mile and a half to Monaco was quickly made. It was still early in the evening. Choosing the shortest route,

he crossed the ancient bridge on foot, climbed the steep road which mounts the high rock, and was soon inside the walls of the little town, with its white palace and red-tiled houses. He went directly to the *Beau Rivage*, asked to be shown to a comfortable room, and to have the proprietor sent to him.

It was not long before this personage appeared. Kenneth asked him for information concerning several people who were supposed to have stopped at his hotel the past winter. The man recognized none of the names which Kenneth mentioned, except that of *Monsieur* Arnold, who, he said, had left Monaco that very morning.

Then Kenneth gained fuller information than he had anticipated, for the man said that he made it a point to do everything in his power to accommodate his guests, or any of their friends.

Arnold had stopped there, at intervals, since early winter. He would remain for days, or, at times, for a week or two. Then he would leave, and be absent for an equal period; but, promptly to the day, he would return.

On former occasions Arnold had left a con-

siderable amount of baggage, but this time he had taken with him almost all — leaving but a few small pieces to be held for his return. The season at Monaco being over, and the weather very warm, he had gone to Paris to remain until the fall. Arnold's habits while there had been very regular — he had had no companions, he spoke very little French, and seemed to care for nothing but the game at Monte Carlo.

Had Kenneth visited Monaco at any time during the winter, or ten days earlier, when he first arrived at Nice, he would have had no difficulty in learning concerning Arnold whatever he desired, for the man had made no secret of his name, his residence, or his habits.

A queer way, he thought, for a murderer to act! Kenneth's faith was a good deal shaken. But, after having succeeded in locating his man at a point which promised to be favorable for whatever action he might finally decide upon, he knew that it was no time to halt.

He took one of the numerous trains which run from Monte Carlo to Nice after dark, and the next morning he started by express for

Paris, just twenty-four hours behind the man of whom he was in pursuit.

On his arrival in that city, the next day, he went directly to a quiet hotel in the *Rue de l'Echelle*. He was so travel-worn, and so exhausted by the almost incessant excitement of the preceding ten days, that, on reaching his room, he threw himself wearily upon the bed and slept until late in the afternoon.

In the evening, refreshed by a bath and dinner, he started out to visit the larger hotels, which, in choosing his own, he had purposely avoided. His object now was to ascertain at which one Arnold was stopping.

While Kenneth was at Nice the letters which he wrote me were, necessarily, very brief. The full account of his experiences while there, which I have given, I gathered in the course of conversation some time afterwards. But the story of his search in Paris I shall, for the most part, give in the words of his letters written at the time. The first one said:

"You may imagine that I did not start out on my search with any great degree of confidence. True, the landlord at Monaco had told me that, on leaving there, Arnold had an-

nounced his intention of going directly to Paris, but that did not assure his having done so. However, I adopted the only course left me — that of searching for him at the different hotels.

"I took a cab from the *Binda*, and, beginning at the *Grand*, I visited three other hotels before reaching the *Continental*, where my search ended. The book contained all the particulars which a Paris register demands: *Name*, Philip Arnold; *Age*, 30; *Nationality*, American; *Occupation*, lawyer; *Last stopping-place*, Monaco.

"This man," Kenneth's letter continued, "is either innocent of having killed my brother that rainy night, or, knowing that there is no evidence in existence which can implicate him, and knowing that another has been convicted of the crime, he fears no danger to himself. Otherwise, he would not travel about the world so indifferent to having his name and whereabouts known.

"No, if Philip Arnold committed that crime there is no man in the world, except himself, who knows it. If he does not reveal the secret no one ever will!"

A second letter, written and posted the next day, contained the following:

"At the *Hôtel Continental* I learned that, after remaining one day, Arnold ordered his trunks sent to number *68 Avenue Marceau*, where, it was understood, he had taken apartments. I was anxious to satisfy myself that he was at the place named, but it was too late to pursue investigations of that character last night, so I returned to the *Binda* and wrote you the letter which will probably reach New York by the same steamer which carries this one.

"This morning, however, I went to the *Avenue Marceau*, and found number 68 to be a tall house, not far from the *Arc de Triomphe.* I concluded to station myself where I could watch the entrance of number 68 until Arnold should make his appearance, as I knew that he must, sooner or later, if, as reported, he had taken up his residence there. My task was exceedingly tedious, but I determined to accomplish it, if it took all day and half the night.

"It was almost noon before my patience was rewarded. Then, as though by previous arrangement, a cab drove up in front of the

door, and in a few moments I saw Philip Arnold — the very man whom I had seen at the roulette-table at Monte Carlo — come out of the house, enter the cab, and drive off.

"I have now accomplished the first step — I have found my man!"

CHAPTER XXI.

SMITH.

THE next letter which I received from Kenneth filled me with astonishment.

"You will be surprised," it began, "to learn that I have entered the services of a gentleman here in Paris as his *valet de chambre!*

"Let me explain. After posting my last letter I returned to my hotel to study over the situation. I had made some progress, but what to do next I was at a loss to know. My course to that time had been plain — I had set myself the task of finding a certain man, and I had succeeded in so doing. But at that point I felt that my resources were exhausted — the future demanded a revelation.

"The next morning, when I went to the *café* for my breakfast, I carried with me a copy of '*Le Figaro.*' I don't know why I bought it, for I was in no mood to read the gossip of the day or the news of the world. Therefore I

turned to the fourth page, and purposely fell to looking over the advertisements. A short distance from the top of the column of '*Petite Annonces*' I came upon the enclosed, which I send for your perusal.

"Imagine my delight! Before three hours had passed I had changed from my hotel to some obscure lodgings, shaved off my mustache and whiskers, bought a complete outfit of new clothes, even including cap and shoes, and that same afternoon I made application.

"At first I used my best French, but soon fell to speaking broken English, when it came to '*Anglais*' requirements. His own knowledge of French is imperfect, and therefore my poor English and good French suited him exactly, and I obtained the situation notwithstanding there were two other applicants ahead of me.

"Consequently, I am now Philip Arnold's *valet*, and he calls me *garçon*. I keep his wardrobe in shape, I order his bath, I assist at his toilet, I bring his papers and letters, and even black his shoes — all for the munificent sum of twenty *francs* per week! But

some day, I apprehend, he may pay very dearly for these services!

"I have now accomplished the second step. It remains for you to take the third. Come at once! I am certain that I shall need you, and I have not provided for the contingency should you fail me. All now depends upon you!

"I think that it would be well for you to bring along a trusty companion, for you may require assistance which I shall not be able to render. The choice I shall leave to you, only suggesting that it should be someone full of grit, with muscle to back it—*one who could do a little hard work, in case of emergency!*

"Direct letters to Armand Gravelle (that means me), *68 Avenue Marceau.* All mail comes into my hands before he receives it. On your arrival in London you will find letters at Baring Brothers, to whose care I shall send everything intended for you. They will contain instructions covering your course when you reach Paris. Do not disappoint me, and do not delay—there is no telling at what moment '*monsieur*' might take a notion to leave Paris."

The scrap which Kenneth had enclosed was

a three-line advertisement, cut from a newspaper. It read:

"ON DEMANDE un valet de chambre parlant l'Anglais: s'adresser dans l'après midi, à Philip Arnold, 68 av. Marceau."

This was Kenneth's letter. It remained for me to act. His appeal — dictated by his own extreme anxiety — that I should not fail him, was wholly unnecessary, for, from the time of the receipt of the first letter written after his visit to Monte Carlo, I had held myself in readiness for some such summons as this.

There being nothing to detain me, I determined to start as soon as I should succeed in engaging the services of the "trusty companion," according to Kenneth's suggestion.

I knew a fellow by the name of Smith who possessed all the qualities which the requisitions called for — "full of grit, with muscle to back it." And, in addition, he would be a most congenial companion, with whom I should delight to travel. But I was by no means certain that I could induce him to go with me. I would try.

Smith lived near Buffalo, where, at one time, his father was a wholesale druggist. During

my student-life in New York, where he was also spending the winter, I first met him at Colonel Montressor's school-at-arms, which we both attended for instruction in the use of the foils. I was at once attracted by Smith's genial manners, and he met my advances by a pleasant frankness, which soon made us friends.

Smith was whole-souled, thoroughly natural, and the blood flowed warm from his heart. His handsome dark eyes were set in a face whose predominant expression was one of good-humor. He was of medium stature, with a well-proportioned, firmly-knit frame, and he excelled in all the manly arts. Like Claude, he had *carte* and *tierce* at his finger-ends, and was equally skillful with the rifle or the rod.

This was the man who I desired should accompany me. It was over two years since I had seen him, though I had heard from him several times while in Paris. I knew that he would make a splendid detective, should any practical display of talents of that order be demanded, for, while he was "sharp" enough, and perfectly self-possessed, at the same time his frank and easy manner would disarm the suspicions even of a jealous woman.

That evening I wrote him a long letter. I also telegraphed to ascertain if he was at home, so that, in the event of his absence, I might seek elsewhere. The next day I heard from him by wire, and the day following brought his letter, which said:

"DEAR DOC:—I am delighted to hear from you. I read an account of 'The Belmont' murder-case at the time of its occurrence, and I am much interested in the additional particulars which you give. I would at once accept your invitation for a trip to Paris were it not that I have already made arrangements to go up the lakes with a party. However, if I can cancel this engagement I will do so, and join you. I will communicate with my friends to-day, and to-morrow you shall know the result.

"Your confidence, of course, is sacred, and even if I do not come you need have no fear that the purpose of your visit will suffer premature announcement through fault of mine. I enclose the ashes of your letter.

"In haste, as ever yours, SMITH."

I presume that the one thing which made me cling to Smith after many of those whose terms

of friendship had been of longer standing were relegated to second place on my list, was that he was still unmarried. A friend, however dear and confidential, is never the same friend after marriage. Trust and confidence are thereby destroyed. That interest which before was inviolate, is now shared by another. Every impulse to become confidential is checked by a feeling that a third party, though now absent, may become the repositor of all one's secrets before morning.

Moreover, like myself, though young, Smith was not only a bachelor, but he was a confirmed bachelor. Not long after I first met him in New York, we discovered that we entertained similar views touching the desirability of wedded life, and we were not long in learning each other's reasons therefor. After the theatre one night we were taking a late supper at a down-town restaurant, where we discussed the subject fully.

The long-established lottery, we concluded, was too uncertain, and its prizes too few, to warrant our taking the risk. A single life could never disappoint us — we were already indulging in that, and we felt well enough sat-

isfied with our condition. But who could guarantee us against regret should we exchange it for one so full of problematical happiness as wedded life involved? Among our own friends who had from time to time entered upon the new estate, we had seen so many who, after a while, showed too plainly that marriage held out promises of happiness which it was not prepared to redeem! True, there were some exceptions, but they were too few in number to afford us any encouragement.

In addition to these considerations, I had little hope of finding one who would just suit my fancy. I knew that the humdrum of the purely domestic would simply set me wild. My tastes demanded one who should be beautiful and accomplished, and gifted with all the graces — one who, by right of nature, was a queen among women. Only this would ever satisfy me, and, rather than accept anything else, I would, like Smith, remain a bachelor.

The day following the receipt of Smith's letter, I heard from him again. His dispatch read:

"*Will come. Reach you Friday morning by New York Central.* SMITH."

I immediately engaged passage for two by one of the fastest boats sailing the following Saturday.

On Smith's arrival I met him at the train, and took him home to breakfast with me. All day we were busy in making our arrangements for sailing on the morrow. At the close of the day our preparations were complete, and the evening was spent with Mrs. Hardy, who was much relieved at the thought that Smith and I would soon be with Kenneth, concerning whom she now felt an intense anxiety.

The following morning, after an early breakfast, we went aboard our boat, which, on being freed from her moorings, seemed to shrink from contact with the land and to feel perfect freedom only after the last uncertain line of coast had dissolved on the western horizon.

CHAPTER XXII.

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

For two wretched days and nights Smith and I could do little but condole with each other over the miseries of our condition. But after we had paid the penalty which the sea demands of all who trespass upon her watery domain, we had a delightful voyage, and enjoyed every hour of it.

When we were neither eating nor sleeping, we were on deck enjoying the sunshine, the fresh, salt air, the regular swinging motion of the boat, and that languid sense of *dolce far niente* which comes to all — even the most anxious and careworn — the moment one is out of sight of land.

There was a little space behind the wheel-house, between that and the bulwarks, just wide enough to accommodate two steamer-chairs, where Smith and I spent most of our time while on deck. Without mingling with

others, we had sufficient to occupy us in discussing the probabilities and possibilities of the mission upon which we had started.

"Now tell me," said Smith, one day, as we were seated in our favorite retreat enjoying our cigars, "about this wonderful drug with which you propose to experiment on our friend Benedict."

From the moment that Smith met me in New York that Friday morning, he had shown his disrespect for our intended victim by speaking of him as "Benedict," and thereafter had never called him by any other name.

"Haschisch, you mean," I remarked.

"Yes. Queer name!"

"True, a very queer name! It is of Arabic origin, and has accompanied the drug itself in its journey from the East. Now the one has become a part of our language, while the other fills an important place in our pharmacopœia."

"It seems to me that I have heard the name before?"

"Yes, you must have done so. There is, also, another and more familiar word for the possession of which we are indebted to this same drug, and that is, *assassin.*"

"As-sas-sin," repeated Smith, slowly. "Does sound like it! How did that happen?"

"Did you never hear the story," I asked, "of the Saracen soldiers who would occasionally rush wildly into a Christian camp, striking right and left, until they themselves were cut down?"

"Yes, I think I have."

"Well, they did that while under the influence of this drug, and when it became known that they were Haschischins, or users of Haschisch, they acquired the name of *assassins*."

"A very appropriate drug for our friend Benedict," remarked Smith, dryly. "But I don't see how you came to know so much."

"That's easy enough. A reference to that court of high appeal in all matters etymological, 'Webster's Unabridged,' will confirm it for anyone."

"But does Webster explain its action? Why should those soldiers rush to their death with such cheerful *abandon?*"

"It may be that I can give the explanation. It is only necessary to understand that while under the influence of Haschisch one's body acts entirely without control of the will."

"Ah! Then those men were mere automata?"

"Yes, so to speak. They were in a delirium."

"A very fatal delirium!"

"True! Almost as fatal as that which afflicted the followers of the 'Old Man of the Mountain!'"

"Is this another story?"

"Yes; it is one of those which almost everyone has heard and forgotten. You will recollect that the Old Man had such fanatical followers that no command of his was too severe for them to obey. His wonderful power he is said to have gained by the aid of Haschisch. One day an emissary of the king waited upon him, with a demand to surrender. But instead of doing so the Old Man summoned one of his soldiers into the presence of the king's representative, and ordered him to kill himself. Instantly the man drew a knife, plunged it into his body, and fell dead on the spot.

"'Go back to your king,' said the Old Man, 'and tell him that I have sixty thousand soldiers who obey me like that!'"

"Yes, now I recall it."

"Well, while the entire story connected with this famous individual is perfectly moss-grown with romance, yet that incident serves to illustrate the miraculous powers possessed by this truly wonderful drug."

"Of what does it consist?"

"It is a preparation made from a species of hemp that grows in India. By the Arabs it is widely indulged in. Among other methods of using it, they smoke it in that peculiar pipe called a *hookah* — I forget its other name. It is their national intoxicant."

"Is it so pleasant in its effects?"

"Is it pleasant? You may know, since it is said to have been the *nepenthes* of Homer, which Helen of Troy gave to Telemachus — that potion which was to make him forget all sorrow!"

"Then it has entered even into the classics?"

"Yes, it has entered into everything that's wonderful!"

"If I understand, its chief action is to deprive one of the power of self-control?"

"That's it. If it be true that *in vino veritas*, then in Haschisch there is not only truth, but

revelation. It seems to divorce the soul from the body. While under its magic spell one's consciousness stands to one side, observing, while the body mechanically performs feats of thought and speech and action which, if it were under the control of the will, would not only be restrained, but, often, impossible."

"O, I see! That's where you'll catch Benedict?"

"Yes, if we once succeed in getting him under its influence. But there lies the difficulty! My hopes of accomplishing this important step are not very robust."

"O, come! Do not let your hopes die of inanition in that fashion, but tell me more about the assassin's weed."

"Very well, I will give you the whole story."

"Do," said Smith, as he tossed his dead cigar among a flock of petrels that were following in the vessel's wake, and lighted a fresh one. "I'll listen."

"It is important to know," said I, "that owing to loss of self-control while under the influence of Haschisch, one is just as apt to reveal secrets, as to utter the most common-

place remark. Moreover, like the soldier in the story, who killed himself on command, one may be so influenced that speech and action will take any form into which others care to mold them. The past, also, will often rise before one's mind like a dream, and any of its scenes may be re-enacted.

"But it produces other equally curious phenomena. It affects one's conception of the duration of time in a most remarkable manner. Time seems to be extended to most interminable length, so that a minute becomes a thousand years, and an hour an eternity. But, notwithstanding this, the time cannot pass swiftly enough, for, while whole eons sweep by, and centuries are crowded into moments, it seems painfully slow to the wretched victim whose mercurial imagination oustrips it in its seemingly dragging march.

"One's sense of distance, also, is similarly affected. To cross a street is equivalent to making a long journey, while to reach a point seen in the far distance, calls for a pilgrimage so appalling in its length that the mind shrinks from its very contemplation.

"But the possibilities of the wonders of

Haschisch are only touched by a knowledge of these distorted concepts of time and space, for in the mental and emotional spheres its effects are even more marvelous. It produces a perfect delirium of being — the emotions are freed from restraint, and the imagination runs riot in the mind! Happiness is supreme, bliss is heavenly, joy is sublime! On the other hand, one touch of sorrow plunges into the profoundest depths of woe, and grief is blank despair!

"Ah, but the images which are presented to one's mind excel in magnificence the wildest flights to which unaided fancy ever soared! Amidst the most ordinary surroundings the dreamer may dwell in crystal palaces, wander through courts of pearl, breathe a perfume-laden air, and hear soft music whose trembling notes thrill like the tender voice of love!"

"Great heavens!" cried Smith. "You are full of the stuff now!"

"Calm yourself," said I. "It is only the memory of what has been."

"I knew it!"

"Yes; in my first year at Paris I listened to a series of lectures by Richet, on the nar-

cotic poisons, and I became so much interested in his account of Haschisch that I conceived a strong desire to realize its effects myself. I obtained a quantity of a reliable preparation, and invited some fellow-students to join me in the experiment.

"Haschisch, you must know, is most variable in its effects, and acts upon no two persons alike, though there are certain general phenomena — such as the delusions of time and space, and the wanton play of the imagination — which characterize all cases. But the particular form is determined by individual peculiarities. Thus, one person may manifest a noisy, another a quiet delirium; one may laugh, another cry, another act in pantomime, or there may be a mingling of all these. In most cases the delirium is ushered in by a spell of immoderate laughter, and this gives way to any of a thousand and one different displays.

"There were four of us — all medical students — gathered in my room in Paris that evening. Two of my companions, Dale and Hayes, were from New York, while Walton, the third, was a Chicago boy. One of the New York boys joined me in the experiment, while

the others devoted their energies to caring for us. In this task they had their hands full, I assure you, for the dose which I took was much larger than I realized before swallowing it, and it made me rather wild.

"Dale, the one who took part in the experiment with me, was a fine musician, and his display was all a quiet pantomime, which took the form of playing on the musical instruments to which he was accustomed, and on many others that he had never touched. In a most extravagant fashion he went through the form of playing imaginary pianos, violins, horns, and a score of other instruments, not stopping short of a big bass drum, which he pounded with a vigor that was truly astonishing.

"With me the delirium was of quite another character, and I would not part with the experiences of that hour for many another so-called pleasure, for it taught me that there are depths of feeling which I had never before fathomed. I then learned a new emotion of pleasure, and, what was equally welcome, a profounder depth of sorrow."

"Well, excuse me from the sorrow!" said Smith.

"O, do not understand me as meaning that I am partial to melancholy! Quite the contrary! But, as a temporary experience, with escape near at hand, I am not averse to drinking deep from sorrow's cup, even as I am willing to imbibe at any fountain whose waters will not do me absolute harm."

"Your explanation is satisfactory," said Smith. "Let me hear more."

"Well," I continued, "my attack began with the usual burst of laughter, which was excited by witnessing Dale's frantic efforts to play the piano in the air. My laughter, however, was succeeded by a spell of grief, in which I felt wholly lost and heart-broken, and I besought my friends, for love of mercy, to lift me from the depths of despair into which I was plunged. Then there were also the usual delusions of time and space.

"But the visions which came to me were strange and fantastic! I remember seeing, driving across the sky, like Guido's Aurora Rospigliosi, an endless procession of immense chariots, and to me each one represented a century of time. They flew by so swiftly that the rapidly-revolving wheels were but trans-

parent discs, while the tires were rings of fire. But, notwithstanding unnumbered centuries rolled by in such quick succession, they could not fly fast enough to keep pace with my fevered desires, and therefore I determined to try a race with Time. I would show the old fellow how to make progress!

"I started. I thought that I flew faster than the wind. In the dim distance ahead of me I saw a tiny speck in the air. It was a swift-winged bird. I redoubled my efforts, overtook, and passed it. Still I was not going fast enough! I threw off all impedimenta. Not fast enough yet! Then it seemed to me that I unbuttoned my flesh, threw that off, and stepped forth in my bones. O, the glorious sense of lightness and freedom! On I sped! The wind whistled through my ribs, and my skeleton feet scarcely touched the elastic ether over which I sprang. Finally I passed the leading chariot and left it far out of sight, and then I threw myself down and laughed loud and long to think that I had gained a victory over Time!"

"What a strange experience!" exclaimed Smith. "And did you really do any running?"

"No. I only left my seat and walked slowly across the room, where I sank to the floor in the spell of laughter which ended the delusion. Having taken a pretty large dose I soon after fell asleep — an effect which sometimes follows. When I awoke, which I did in less than an hour, the effects of the drug had all passed off, with the exception of a strange sensation in my head, which, however, left me by the following morning."

Smith and I had been so pre-occupied that the dinner-hour had passed without our having noted it, and when we came from our seclusion the other passengers were returning from the saloon below. This piece of negligence, however, we were careful not to repeat in the course of the voyage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PAIR OF ENGLISH TOURISTS.

FOUR days later we reached Liverpool. When we had anchored in mid-stream, a nervous little tender appeared from somewhere among the shipping and quickly transferred us from the vessel's deck to the floating dock which hugged the land.

After going through the formality of passing the customs it was almost train-time, and a few hours sufficed to set us down in London — dear, dirty old London — after all, still the center of the world!

We drove directly from Euston Square to the bank, where we found several letters from Kenneth. These we carried, unopened, to our hotel, in order to read them at our leisure, which we did with great interest as soon as we had retired to our room. The latest one was written but the day before.

"If a man ever needed the assistance of

friends," wrote Kenneth, "I am that one. But I do not complain — my situation is the result of my own deliberate act, and I have not weakened in my purpose. I only ask speedy relief. You and your friend had better assume the characters of English tourists, and come to Paris in disguise. You will understand how to accomplish this, better than I can tell you. At the *Normandie* you will find letters awaiting you, containing the very latest instructions. I shall anxiously await your coming."

Kenneth's advice regarding our disguise was all very well, but Smith and I laughed heartily at the idea of our assuming the characters of Englishmen. However, in strict obedience, we set about getting up our costumes without delay.

Smith, with his round face and ruddy complexion, might, as regarded personal appearance, pass very well, but I feared that my features would be less deceptive.

However, by using the razor less on our cheeks and more on our chins, and by raising the parting in our hair from the neighborhood of our left ears to a line with our noses, we

both came out looking as though we had been strangers to America half our lives. Then, by donning our new suits, exchanging our boots for thick-soled shoes, and our soft felts for high-crowned derbys, the transformation was complete.

Some of the details of our disguise might not bear rigid scrutiny, but if an umbrella apiece — which a true Englishman always carries to show his poor opinion of the weather — would not save us, we were willing to return to America as a pair of broken-down detectives.

Thus equipped, we took the train for Dover and had a "beastly passage across the nasty channel."

In the short time that we were in London Smith had studied the English habits to some advantage. It amused me to see him, with one hand stuck in the side-pocket of his coat, exchange his American gait, with its short, quick step, for the longer and more deliberate English stride, and walk off after a fashion calculated to deceive the entire population of the British Isles, could they have witnessed his performance.

Smith, also, compelled me to give up *guess-*

ing, and take to *thinking*—a very sensible change, I was willing to admit. And then the facility with which he rang in "I dare say," and "quite so," and the easy *nonchalance* with which he spoke of his "luggage," were very clever indeed.

We arrived in Paris in the morning, and at the *Normandie* found the promised letters.

Our "chief of police," as Smith called Kenneth, advised us to stop but one day at the hotel, and then come to number *68 Avenue Marceau*, where there were still several "*appartements meublés*" to let, and where he desired us to secure a *suite* for ourselves, even going so far as to tell us which we had better select. There was no reason, he said, why our presence there should excite suspicion, and, once in the house, he would have little difficulty in finding means to communicate with us, when further plans could be developed.

Meanwhile, as Kenneth said, any day at eleven o'clock, by stationing ourselves at a point which he indicated, and watching the entrance to number 68, we might see Arnold, accompanied by himself, leave the door of the house and walk to the *Cercle Franco-Americain*,

in the *Place de la Madeleine*, where the former went regularly to read the papers and to take lunch, before returning to dress for his afternoon drive.

It was then half-past nine, and Smith and I determined to take our first observation that very morning.

Eleven o'clock found us stationed at the point which Kenneth had indicated, intently watching the door of our future abode. We had not long to wait. In about ten minutes after we had begun observations the door opened, and, the better to observe those who came forth, we sauntered slowly down the opposite side of the avenue.

In a moment, two figures appeared. There was Philip Arnold, answering to the description which I had already received of him. But I was not prepared for what followed.

What wonder that Kenneth Hardy had been so successful in carrying out his daring scheme! His own mother would not have seen in the little lame boy who limped beside that tall man, the Kenneth of the day before his illness.

His loss of flesh, not yet fully regained,

his stooping attitude, and his tight-fitting clothes, made him look like a boy, compared to his former size. On discovering me he carelessly removed his cap, and his short, straight hair, seemingly lighter in color than that which he had lost, his clean-shaven face, and a peculiar expression given him by some other change which I could not then account for, would have deceived the most acute observer, and baffled a Pinkerton himself.

After they had turned into the *Avenue des Champs Elysées*, Smith and I retraced our steps and followed them at a safe distance until they disappeared in the entrance to the club-house in the *Place de la Madeleine.* Then we took a cab and drove rapidly back to number 68, where, after looking at all the vacant apartments, with much show of hesitation we finally told the *concierge* that we would take those which he had first shown us. It was the *suite* which Kenneth had indicated. We secured the apartments, promising to return at noon of the next day to occupy them.

"Well," said Smith, as we returned to our quarters at the *Hôtel de Normandie,* "this is becoming decidedly interesting. I rather like the looks of Benedict."

"He has the appearance of one who takes excellent care of himself."

"Yes, and he is a shrewd one, too. He will be a hard chap to corner."

"I have many misgivings myself, and can scarcely see that we are any nearer the attainment of our object. If but the single crime of robbery were involved, I would propose recovering the diamonds by some sort of a compromise."

"Compromise nothing!" exclaimed Smith. "That is the poorest policy in the world — one in which the wrong party always gets the best of the bargain."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because, in suing for peace at any price, you sue for peace at your enemy's price."

"But supposing we should set our own price?"

"Can't do that! In a compromise the meanest man always makes the terms."

"Then what must we do?"

"Wait."

"For how long?"

"Until death, if necessary. But I have a growing belief that a man of principle and con-

sistency, if he have good health, may live to witness the defeat of his last enemy."

"Your patience is exhaustless. I should prefer, now that we are on the soil of France, to see you settle it with him according to the code."

"Well, yes, that would be a good way, too!" said Smith.

The next day we removed to our new quarters, which were as comfortable as the most fastidious taste could demand. We felt somewhat like prisoners, however, in not being able to go and come with perfect freedom, for we timed our movements so as to avoid coming into contact with Arnold. This was not hard to do, however, as Kenneth had given us minute information regarding Arnold's habits, which were very regular. He had written us, moreover, that we might receive a call from himself any morning, between seven and eight o'clock.

At the appointed time the next morning Smith and I were up and dressed, ready to receive Kenneth, should he come. It was almost eight when a light tap at our door was followed by his entrance.

We were glad enough to see him, and he was perfectly overjoyed at meeting us. The strain upon him, he said, was terrible, and, with our assistance, he prayed for an early deliverance. He had to perform, he said, every service belonging to the position which he had assumed, save that of shaving Arnold, for the latter would permit no hand but his own to touch a razor to his face. His task was at all times very irksome, and it was often made doubly trying by Arnold's harshness and severity. Thus far he had succeeded in restraining himself when tempted to resent this, but he was not sure that he might not sometime be pushed beyond endurance. He begged us, therefore, to remain within call at all times when they themselves were at home.

Kenneth further explained that his own room, which communicated with and adjoined Arnold's, had a door which opened into the same hall-way as ours, and, by means of this, he could visit us regularly every morning. Arnold, he said, seldom returned home until long after midnight, and never arose the next day before ten o'clock. Therefore, in the early

morning hours, it was not necessary for Kenneth to account for his whereabouts.

"Well, Kenneth," I asked, "what is the next step?"

"I have considered all that," said he.

"Well, what is your conclusion? Are you on the right track?"

"I think so, but I cannot be certain."

"Then what is to be done?"

"Nothing, that I can see, except to carry out our original design, and call Haschisch to our aid."

"You have not given that up, then?"

"No, indeed! I am more dependent upon it than ever, for, notwithstanding the close watch that I have kept of him, I have made no new discoveries. There is not, in his case, the ten thousandth part of the evidence that convicted Gordon Wright."

"And there is no other way in which to obtain it, than by the use of Haschisch?"

"No. Of that I am thoroughly convinced. If convicted at all, he must be self-convicted, and this drug of yours is the only thing which will ever extract a confession from him, if he has one to make."

"There's the difficulty! I do not see how we are to get him to take it."

"I have considered that point, and, though my plans have not yet assumed definite shape, I will give them to you in outline. We must try to get a company together at the club where he spends so much of his time, the subject of Haschisch must be introduced, and an effort made to draw him into the experiment of taking some. How would that work?"

"Admirably, if he should prove to be in the least curious to test it, for, with the dose once down his throat, I would be almost willing to guarantee the result."

"Well, that is what I have been counting on."

"But how on earth can a pair of English tourists carry out such a scheme as that in a Paris club-house?"

"I do not expect 'a pair of English tourists' to accomplish it, unaided. You must gain the co-operation of someone who resides here in Paris."

"With the right kind of a man that might work very well, but where are we to find him?"

"I was wondering if that doctor who first

proposed the thing, might not be willing to undertake it with you?"

"LeBaron?"

"Yes."

"Kenneth," I cried, "you are gifted with almost supernatural wisdom! He is the man!"

"So I thought."

"I will call upon him this very day, and to-morrow you shall know the result. Smith will remain on guard in my absence."

Having concluded this arrangement, Kenneth prepared to leave us. As he crossed the room, I remarked that he did not appear to be as lame as he had been when we saw him in the street.

"No," said Kenneth. "I have been growing better ever since I left home. My lameness now is only sufficient to aid me in simulating a greater degree."

"One question more," I asked, as he was about to pass out; "there is a peculiar expression about your face which adds very much to your disguise, and yet I cannot discover its cause. What have you been doing to yourself?"

"I have made a clean shave."

"No, that is not it."

Kenneth smiled. "Look at my eyebrows," said he.

I did look at his eyebrows — all there were to look at, for he had none.

"When I was at school," he explained, "one of my class-mates, a boy by the name of Newbury, came one morning with an altered expression of his face, which excited much comment. But none of us could discover what it was that made him look so queer. Finally he told us that, in lieu of a mustache on which to operate, he had, with his father's razor, shaved off his eyebrows."

"And you took your cue from that?"

"Yes. Since that time I have always noticed, in my contact with people, how much the expression of the face is determined by the brows, and when I was getting up this rig one of the first things that I did was to use the scissors on my eyebrows, leaving only this little line of fuzz."

"That was a happy thought, Kenneth."

"I am glad that you think it to be such a success. But now I must leave you, and go back to bondage. You may expect me to-morrow

again, at eight o'clock," said he, as he closed the door.

I had no difficulty in finding Dr. LeBaron, who was one of the eminent physicians of Paris, renowned for his many original investigations in chemical science. The directory which I consulted for the purpose of learning his address, gave the additional information that he had retired from the activo practice of his profession, and a curious little cross, opposite his name, denoted, also, that he was a chevalier of the legion of honor.

I called upon the doctor, at his residence in the *Rue Vignon*, that same evening, carrying with me the copy of the *Journal de Médecine* which contained his article. I introduced myself as a former pupil at *L'Ecole de Médecine*, and told him that, attracted by his suggestion touching a new application of the powers of Haschisch, I had taken the liberty of calling upon him in order to gain additional information.

Dr. LeBaron received me very politely, and, on the subject of my visit, showed an interest amounting almost to enthusiasm. Especially was this true of the novel use of Haschisch

which he had been the first to suggest. He told me that, since writing the article in question, he had given the matter even more attention than before, and had been trying to devise some method of making a practical application of his theory.

He had even gone so far as to consult an eminent judge of the city, a former patron of his, with a view to having some criminal from whom it was desired to obtain a confession, submitted to a commission of physicians, of which he should be one, for the purpose of experiment. But he had been informed that, under existing laws, such a thing was absolutely impossible. Consequently he had, for the time, abandoned the project, but was only awaiting a favorable opportunity, when he hoped to test it.

As may well be imagined, I was overjoyed at what I had heard. The way was made smooth before me without effort on my part.

Then I revealed to Dr. LeBaron the true nature of my errand. I related the history of the murder, and Arnold's supposed connection with it. I told him all, concealing nothing. Then I threw myself upon his generosity, ask-

ing that if he could not see his way clear to aid us, he would, at least, respect my confidence.

Dr. LeBaron listened with close attention until I had concluded. Then he sprang from his chair, grasped my hand, and shook it again and again.

Would he aid us? *Certainement!* It was the very opportunity for which he had been wishing. Yes, he would do it! If it accomplished nothing, it would at least do no harm, either to *Monsieur* Arnold or to others.

Then he asked many questions calling for information which my narrative had not conveyed. When and where did we propose that the experiment should be made?

The time, I told him, was now for him to determine. The place which we had in mind was the *Cercle Franco-Americain.*

Better and better! He had himself once been a member of the *Cercle*, but for several years he had neglected his dues; this, however, was a matter which he could easily remedy, and then resume his attendance without exciting comment. After having accomplished this much he would take pains to form the acquaint-

ance of *Monsieur* Arnold — a step which, considering the relations of the members of the club, would present but little difficulty — and then he would communicate with me and appoint an hour for another conference.

Our conversation, to this time, had been in French, but, as I was about to depart, the doctor said:

"Ven *Monsieur* first address me, I haf ze *difficulté* to know hees *nationalité.* Von moment I sink *l'Anglais*, an zen *l'Americain.* I haf alvays ze *grand plaisir* to meet *l'Americain.*"

"Ah, *Monsieur*," I replied, "you have greater command of my language than I have of yours."

"*Non, non!*" he protested. "*Vous me flattez!*"

"You have not always lived in Paris, *monsieur?*"

"*C'est vrai!* I haf travel in Greece, in Persia, in Egypt. I haf several times veseet *Londre*, an' von time *l'Amerique.* I haf ze *plaisir* to nombaire among my friends many *Americains*, an' I fin' zem alvays *très agréables.*"

Returning the compliment in kind, I left the

doctor, very much encouraged with the prospect of success to our plans which his interest promised.

"Did you find him?" asked Smith, as I returned to our quarters at a late hour that night."

"Yes."

"Tell him?"

"Yes."

"Will he do it?"

"Did you ever know a Frenchman," I asked, "unwilling to try an experiment?"

"Then it's all up with Benedict!"

"I wish it were. But we cannot yet be certain of that."

"Well, you must admit that the prospect brightens?"

"Yes — somewhat."

"What is it you said just now about French experiments?"

"That ever since the day that Paré first tied an artery, instead of cauterizing it, French physicians and scientists have been a race of bold and successful experimenters. When Pinel struck the bonds from the limbs of the

insane, Laennec taught the use of the ear in diagnosis, and Pasteur cultivated disease germs — each time medical science received an impetus which it still feels, and the name of the great Charcot, at the present moment France's most eminent physician, will live for centuries! Yes, in bold and novel experiment the French lead the world!"

"*Vive la France!*" cried Smith, taking his feet down from the mantel and placing them on the rug for the purpose of standing on them. "What next?"

"What next!" I exclaimed. "Who knows but that Dr. LeBaron has already sounded the key-note of the next great discovery that is to be heralded to the world? Who knows but that as a result of our coming experiment, the method for the trial of criminals the world over will be revolutionized? Criminal courts, with all their tedious delays, cumbersome machinery, and miscarriages of justice, will be abolished, and in their stead confessions which were once cruelly, and often falsely, extorted by means of the rack, the stock and the thumbscrew, will hereafter be solicited by the magic

touch of Haschisch. Then no longer will the innocent be punished for the crimes of the guilty, and the guilty go free!"

"I like the picture that you draw," said Smith.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GOD OF LUCK.

THE next morning Kenneth repeated his visit, and listened eagerly to the report of my interview with Dr. LeBaron. He was delighted to learn that my proposition had been so favorably received by the doctor, and to find that no obstacle to our progress had yet appeared.

Kenneth lingered with us as long as he could safely do so, in order, he said, to get some respite from the strain which was upon him at other times. Owing to Arnold's imperfect command of French all conversation between themselves was carried on in English, which Kenneth, in order to preserve the consistency of his part, spoke with a marked French accent. This of itself, he said, was very tedious.

He gave us a fuller account of Arnold's habits and peculiarities than he had been able to do on the occasion of his first visit. With little variation, he said, the same programme

was daily repeated. After lunching at *Durandi*, he would spend a short time at the club. This would be followed in the afternoon by a drive on the Avenue or in the Bois. Occasionally, in the evening, he would patronize the theatre or the opera, but he seemed to prefer spending his time at the card-table.

In the matter of his personal appearance he was as particular as he was in all his other habits. His dress, without being showy, was faultlessly neat. Diamonds, as Kenneth had carefully noted, he never wore, his only jewelry consisting of two curious rings, whose mottled blue stones were of a most peculiar shape — unlike anything that he had ever seen before. Arnold, he said, seemed to regard these rings with a sort of superstition, as though they were talismans of good or evil, for whenever luck was against him at cards the rings would be laid away, only to be worn again when fortune renewed her favors.

Thus an hour soon passed, and Kenneth left us. But, with one exception, his visit was repeated daily for a week.

On one of his morning visits Kenneth left with me the key to his outer door, and, using

it as a pattern, I had a duplicate made, by means of which Smith and I could, thereafter, enter his room whenever we desired. In this way it was possible for us to gain access even to the inner door of Arnold's own chamber, without our presence being known.

In order to accustom ourselves to this mode of communication with Kenneth, on the latter's suggestion we penetrated one night to Arnold's door, and while there we overheard a spirited conversation between the *valet* and his master. To the harsh language which the latter used Kenneth submitted in a quiet manner which would have astonished me greatly had I not known his strong motives for restraint. As it was, I felt very uncomfortable, knowing that if a crisis did not soon come in one way, it must in another.

At the end of the week I received a line from Dr. LeBaron, requesting me to call and to bring my companion with me. Accordingly, after Kenneth and Arnold had left for the club that evening, Smith and I set out for the *Rue Vignon.*

After a cordial welcome, Dr. LeBaron gave us an account of his week's work. The day

following the one on which I had seen him, he resumed his attendance at the *Cercle Franco-Americain* as though he had never allowed it to lapse. Aided by the information which I had given him regarding Arnold's habits, the doctor was not long in discovering him, and he soon managed to form an acquaintance which he took pains to cultivate. In this direction he had already made considerable progress.

The doctor also took occasion to compliment Kenneth, whom he had seen in attendance on Arnold, for his successful assumption of the character of a French *valet*, which he declared to be perfection itself.

But Dr. LeBaron had not failed to make a very close study of his new acquaintance.

"Eet ees my custom, *messieurs*," said he, "ven I study ze man, to look at heem as I look at ze plant, ze insect, ze crystal, in my *laboratoire* — I analyze heem. So I study ze man Arnold. He ees strange! He worship *luck* — he haf no ozza god. *Monsieur* Arnold nevaire violate hees conscience — he haf not ze conscience zat he can violate. Viz heem, all zat succeed ees right — to fail ees ze only crime.

As *les enfants acéphaliques* are born vizout ze brain, so in heem ze *moralité* nevaire exist.

"*Très bien!* Eet ees also my custom, ven I mus' deal viz ze man, to deescovaire in heem ze *grande passion*, an' on zat I play. *Monsieur* Arnold haf ze von desiare — to get *monnaie!* Ze vay zat he do so, ees no *différence;* but he mus' get ze *monnaie! Monsieur* Arnold ees — vat you call — ze misaire. He spen' *monnaie,* but he spen' it all for heemself. He gambel, but he care not for ze card — he play for ze *monnaie* zat ze card bring. Eef he not vin all ze time, he not play. Ven he lose, he is in bad tempaire; ven he vin, he vill do anysing — but part viz hees *monnaie!*

"Zen ze only vay, *messieurs,* zat *Monsieur* Arnold can be approach, ees by ze *grande passion* for ze gambling. How can ve zen manage zat delicate leetle mattaire?"

"See here!" spoke up Smith. "From the time that I first joined this foreign expedition, I have been a perfect deadhead; but now there appears to be a chance for me to render some real service. It is against my principles to gamble, but, just to accommodate a friend, I am willing to make the sacrifice."

"But," said Dr. LeBaron, "*Monsieur* Arnold mus' vin all ze *monnaie?*"

"Well, not if I can help it," replied Smith. "That isn't the way I learned the game."

Dr. LeBaron raised his shoulders in deprecation, and, losing command of his meagre supply of English, began in elegant French to expostulate with Smith on the perils of such a course, not one word of which did the latter understand.

As soon as I could get Dr. LeBaron's attention I explained that Smith would, without doubt, be guided by our judgment in the matter. But the doctor would not be satisfied until Smith had promised faithfully to come out loser in the proposed game.

In fact, Dr. LeBaron showed as keen an interest in the success of our experiment as Kenneth himself could have felt.

It was then finally arranged that the next time that Dr. LeBaron met Arnold at the club he should inform the latter that he expected to entertain some London friends at a dinner, and invite Arnold to be one of the company. At the same time he would intimate that there might be a chance for an interesting game of

cards. Meanwhile, Smith and I were to exercise extra care in our efforts to avoid coming into contact with Arnold.

The next Tuesday, when Kenneth made his accustomed morning visit, he informed us that Arnold had received and accepted Dr. LeBaron's invitation to a dinner at the club, to be given the following Thursday. By the twelve o'clock post I received a line from Dr. LeBaron to the same effect.

To me our two days of preparation were full of anxiety and vague apprehension, knowing how much we had staked on the result of our experiment, and knowing, furthermore, how slight an accident might stand between success and failure.

CHAPTER XXV.

HASCHISCH.

WHEN Thursday evening came Smith and I dressed and went to the club at an early hour, so as to be certain to anticipate Arnold's arrival.

As we drove in an open carriage down the broad avenue of the *Champs Elysées*, the clustered lights illuminated a brilliant scene which can be found nowhere but in Paris.

Here and there, through arched gateways, could be seen the swaying forms of graceful dancers, while from hidden bands among the trees strains of music floated forth in sweet rivalry of sound. The promenade on either side was lined by careless people, talking and laughing, as though life's highest aim had been attained in the pleasures of the hour, which they were there to celebrate.

It was an enchanting scene in which to linger for a moment, and to remember many years.

But this night, as we passed, the still air rested on the earth like a lifeless mass, and the sky was hung with dark and heavy clouds.

Turning the corner of the *Place de la Concorde* our carriage traversed the short length of the *Rue Royale*, and in a few minutes we were at the entrance to the club-house.

Dr. LeBaron was already waiting when we arrived, and we repaired at once to the *salon* which he had engaged for the evening. There we had ample time to agree upon the remaining details of our programme, which, at the doctor's request, included a provision that Smith should pretend to take part in the Haschisch-eating. For this purpose he promised to give Smith a dose of some innocent substance, which should not injuriously affect him.

It was about an hour after our arrival that a servant announced *Monsieur* Arnold, and in a moment more he entered.

As often as I had seen this man, in the covert spying which we had done, I was not prepared for the appearance which he presented. His peculiar step had in it an air of careless ease, as though he had no more favors to ask of the

world which he helped to inhabit, while his eye and his lip expressed a satisfaction with his own condition, and a contempt for that of others, which indicated that he felt himself to be sufficiently master of circumstances to control them in his own interest.

He was dressed in the extreme of the fashion, with nice attention paid to every detail which the tailor's art permitted. Jewelry, however, was conspicuously absent. With the exception of a small jet button in the center of his immaculate shirt-front, he wore none. Even his fingers were destitute of the rings which Kenneth had described, a fact which indicated, as I inferred, that his "lucky" star was not then in the ascendant.

Close in his rear he was followed by Kenneth, to whom, without looking back, he carelessly threw a cloak which he drew from his shoulders. Kenneth deftly caught this on his arm, and then retired from the room.

It was not long before dinner was ordered, when we four sat down to a most inviting banquet. Dr. LeBaron, who was the life of the company, was full of anecdote and reminiscences of his travels in the East. Arnold,

who proved also to be an interesting talker, was fully capable of bearing his part in the conversation, and seemed to take pride in making as favorable an impression as possible.

After the wine with which the repast concluded, the attendants cleared the table and brought in cards and cigars. Smith took the cards, and invited us all to join him. Dr. LeBaron and I excused ourselves, for adequate reasons, and thus Smith was left to become the victim of the game, while we looked on.

At first Arnold gained very heavily, but soon, by more careful play, Smith retrieved part of his losses. After that the game was more even, and yet slightly in Arnold's favor the greater part of the time. As the two became more and more interested, Dr. LeBaron and I withdrew to another part of the room and engaged in conversation.

Smith, acting under instructions, for some time played with less regard to his own winnings than to carrying out our designs. But after this had continued long enough to become tedious, he could not resist the temptation of giving Arnold, now flushed with success, a slight check. Thanks to much indulgence in

"penny-ante" by evening camp-fires, Smith understood the game right well, and soon began making inroads into his opponent's pile. This sport, however, he was not permitted long to enjoy, for so soon as Arnold discovered that the winnings were no longer in his favor, he arose from the table, threw down his cards, and asked Smith if it was not time to join us with our cigars.

Smith was angry. At another time, or under any other circumstances, he would have resented such conduct in a manner calculated to call for an apology; but, suppressing his indignation, he took a cigar from the box which Arnold extended toward him, and prepared to act upon his suggestion.

As they approached they found us engaged in an animated discussion on the subject of narcotics, and I appealed to them to come and listen to Dr. LeBaron's account of the wonders of the national intoxicant of the Orient.

Smith expressed great willingness to do so, while Arnold appeared to be rather indifferent, as he languidly accepted my offer of a light for his cigar. Dr. LeBaron had not proceeded far in his account, however, before he

too began to manifest considerable interest, and to ask occasional questions.

"Pardon me, doctor," said Arnold, "is this Haschisch, as you call it, in use at the present day?"

"*Oui, monsieur, certainement!*" exclaimed Dr. LeBaron. "My friend, *le docteur*, vill, vizout doubt, haf ze kindness to read ze account from ze book of my colleague, *Monsieur le Docteur Richet.*"

So saying, he handed me a copy of Richet's lectures, already referred to, and pointed to a paragraph which I, translating, read:

"In the Orient Haschisch is used very extensively. The prevailing custom is to smoke it in large pipes. The smoke is very agreeable, exhaling a peculiar aroma. At Cairo or Damascus, on entering certain Arabian *cafés*, one perceives its penetrating odor, which slightly affects even those who do not smoke. Under the influence of even so small a dose as this Haschisch produces a sort of somnolence, in which objects assume fantastic shapes, which pass like a vision before the dreamy brain. The shrill and monotonous music becomes sweetly soothing to the sleepy dreamer. On

the walls are seen fantastic figures, in strange shapes and colors, and the smokers, in whom they awaken the most delicious illusions, believe themselves transported to the paradise of Mahomet. The further to charm the languid senses, a singer chants a long refrain, half religious and half heroic, composed of couplets, and between each couplet the music recommences its interminable rhythm.

"Occasionally one of the smokers half rises, cries out, and goes into ecstacies over some vision which he perceives in his delirium, and ends by extolling the blessings of Haschisch. Then all the others begin to laugh, and, also, with that profound religious sentiment which never leaves an Oriental, they cry to the one who has spoken: Praise be unto Allah! May Allah be with thee!"

As I finished reading I handed the book to Arnold, sitting next me, who turned the pages for a moment, and then handed it to Dr. Le-Baron, asking, as he did so:

"Did you ever see it used, doctor?"

"*Oui, monsieur;* at Damascus, many times. I haf myself also had ze satisfaction of ze enjoyment. Eet ees *marvelleuse, très marvelleuse!*"

"Is there any reason why the Arabs should have a monopoly of all the good things in life?" asked Smith.

"No reason," said the doctor.

"Then why cannot we have a little oriental *séance* right here in Paris?"

"I vill procure some Haschisch, and he can indulge who haf ze desiare," said Dr. LeBaron.

So saying, the doctor rang for a servant, to whom he gave a card on the back of which he had written a few words, with instructions to carry it to a neighboring pharmacy and to return immediately with the article for which it called.

While the servant was absent on his errand the conversation continued upon the same subject. When he re-entered, Arnold asked:

"Can any harm follow its use, Doctor?"

"Eet ees pairfectly harmless, *monsieur*, an' ze effect soon pass avay."

"If that's so," exclaimed Smith, "you may enter my name as a candidate for the paradise of Mahomet!"

"*Monsieur* vill nevaire regret eet! Ze bliss zat he feel make him forget zat life haf a care. Vill not *Monsieur* Arnold also indulge?" asked

the doctor, as he carefully removed the lid from a small porcelain box which the servant had handed to him.

"Thank you," said Arnold, with greater readiness than we had dared hope for. "I have exhausted all the ordinary pleasures of life, doctor, and I shall count him my greatest friend who offers me a new one."

With the point of a knife Dr. LeBaron took from the little round box a small quantity of a dark, greenish-colored gum, which, as it was passed from one to another for inspection, gave off an agreeable, aromatic odor. Then, as he was engaged in filling two capsules from the box, he explained:

"As *le docteur* read from ze book of *Monsieur* Richet, ze favoreet *méthode* in ze Orient ees to take ze Haschisch by ze smoke in ze Persian pipe — ze *hookah*, ze *nargileh*. But zey also take eet in ze great *varieté*. Ze principal kind zat come to ze market of Europe, ees zat I show you — ze Haschisch, an' ve take eet like ze dose of *quinine*," said he, as he handed a well-filled capsule to both Smith and Arnold.

Throwing back his head, Smith bolted his dose without ceremony, and Arnold immediately followed his example.

When I saw that capsule, filled with Haschisch, disappear down Philip Arnold's throat, I had my first feeling of relief from long-continued suspense. Then, for the first time, I felt that, possibly, our labors had not been in vain.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DUMB SHOW.

After they had swallowed their doses, Dr. Le Baron informed the two experimenters that it would be some time before the Haschisch would take effect, and meanwhile, as we all disposed ourselves in the comfortable seats which the elegant *salon* afforded, he entertained us with stories of adventure connected with his travels in the East.

For my part, I was glad to remain a silent listener. Arnold paid close attention to the doctor's interesting narratives, while nothing could dash the ever-volatile spirits of Smith, who was at all times ready with question or comment.

One story of exciting adventure which the doctor told I recollected having read in the papers at the time that it occurred, though the names of the participants had passed from my mind.

While Dr. LeBaron was traveling in Greece in company with several friends, one of their number was captured by brigands, and held for a considerable ransom. The doctor was deputed to negotiate with the robbers for the release of their captive. Alone and unarmed, with the money on his person, he met them at a point where he was completely within their power. But, notwithstanding this exposure, the exchange was made, and he was permitted to return unharmed, accompanied by his ransomed friend.

"Then it is true," said Arnold, "that there is honor even among thieves."

"Yes, but d——d little honesty!" exclaimed Smith.

At this retort we all laughed. But when the others had ceased, Arnold continued. His laughter became loud, immoderate, extravagant, and we looked at each other with feelings of mingled inquiry and satisfaction. Dr. LeBaron nodded his head, as indicating that the spell had begun.

Arnold's paroxysm of laughter was so violent that when it subsided he fell back in his chair, almost exhausted, and called for water.

This was an opportunity for which I had been watching. I stepped to the door and asked Kenneth, who was without, to bring a glass of water, which he did, and himself offered it to Arnold, who, in a dazed manner, took it from his hand and drank. Kenneth took the glass from Arnold again, and placed it on a table in a distant part of the room, near which he seated himself.

In a few moments Arnold again became aroused. Seeing the cards on a table near him, he grasped them, and, in an extravagant manner, but still without speaking, he began to rapidly shuffle and deal. In this fashion he played several games with an imaginary opponent. As he played, he became more and more excited. He drew money from his pocket, placed it on the table, and pretended to win and lose. Then he drew one gold piece after another from the opposite side, where in his play he had permitted them to accumulate, and, as he pocketed the last *louis*, he burst into another spell of laughter, more violent than the first.

As this gave signs of subsiding Kenneth stood ready at his side again with a glass of

water, from which Arnold took a few swallows. Then letting his head fall back on his chair, he remained quiet for some time, breathing heavily.

At this moment the storm without, which had been threatening since early evening, burst forth, and a fitful wind dashed great sheets of rain against the windows.

At the first sound of the noisy rain Arnold became restless, opened his eyes, leaned forward, and appeared to listen. He then slowly arose from his seat, took a few careful steps, and went through the motions of gently opening and closing a door. Evidently oblivious to all his surroundings — like one who is in a state of somnambulism — he moved forward again with a stealthy and cat-like motion. At another point he repeated the action of opening and closing a door, and then turned and approached the table on which the box of Haschisch lay. Toward this box he reached forth his hand, but, instead of touching it, he grasped from beside it the open knife with which Dr. LeBaron had dealt out the doses.

We all watched him in breathless silence. Kenneth, in his corner of the room, tightly

grasped the arms of his chair and leaned forward with a steady gaze fixed on Arnold, which might almost penetrate to the man's heart. And all this time the rain steadily beat against the glass.

Again the mute actor turned, repassed a door, took a few steps, and opened and closed another airy door. To this one he gave greater manipulation than he had to either of the others. Then, more steathily than ever, almost creeping, he approached a lounge which stood against the opposite wall. At this he knelt, and, taking from his pocket a handkerchief, he held it at arm's length, and slowly and gradually lowered his hand until it rested on the soft velvet cushion at the head of the lounge.

All the time intently listening, he then went through motions as though transferring various articles from beneath the cushion to his own pockets. He then turned to leave, but, after taking a few steps, he paused for a moment, irresolute. He then retraced these steps, reached over on the lounge, and drew the knife, which he still carried in his hand, against the farther edge of the cushion.

Then, hastily but stealthily, he made his

way to the spot where he had last encountered an imaginary door. He passed this, passed another, and deposited the knife on the table from which he had taken it. Then making his way to the spot whence he had first started, instead of resuming the chair which he had left, he did what astonished and perplexed me more than anything which had preceded. He knelt on the floor behind this chair, and, taking his own knife from his pocket, began to work at the plastering of the wall, as though he would penetrate it. He then took some papers from the inside pocket of his coat, and deposited them on the carpet.

But at this instant the knife dropped from his hand, and he fell over upon the floor. Dr. LeBaron hastened to his side, put his finger on his pulse, and, with a motion of his hand, cautioned us to silence.

"Zare ees no dangaire," said he. "He sleeps."

I turned to Kenneth. The expression on his face I wish that I might forget, but I know that I never shall! Had his brother been murdered before his eyes, it could not have depicted greater horror. In the intensity of

his emotion he would have cried out, had he not rushed quickly from the room.

I followed him. In an adjoining apartment he threw himself into a seat, and set all his muscles in effort at restraint.

"That man killed my brother!" he gasped.

"Yes. And yet, what have we gained?"

"Everything!"

"No, nothing!"

"What do you mean?"

"He cannot be convicted on that dumb show —*he did not speak a word!*"

"Then have we accomplished nothing?"

"Nothing that warrants action. We must have more positive evidence than this."

"If this is not enough, what more can we possibly do?"

"First of all, we must examine the walls of the room which he occupied that night, and be guided by what we there discover. For the present we have done!"

Poor Kenneth sank back in despair. It hurt me to be compelled thus to discourage him, but I knew that such a course was better than it would be to permit him to deceive himself, and thereby be led into taking some false step.

At this moment I was summoned to the next room. There I assisted Dr. LeBaron and Smith to place Arnold on the lounge. We had scarcely accomplished this task before he awakened, looked about him in an uncertain manner, and asked if he had not been there a very long time. Dr. LeBaron assured him that, on the contrary, the time had been very short, and asked if there was anything that he desired.

Arnold begged that his *valet* might be summoned, as he wished to return home. On receiving the word Kenneth entered, bringing Arnold's cloak and gloves.

At this instant the latter discovered his knife and papers on the floor, beneath the broken plastering. He started up, and a look came into his face which it would be hard to translate into words. After gazing at the spot awhile, he exclaimed:

"Ah! It was not a dream then, after all!"

The doctor and I remained silent. Finally Arnold turned to the former, and said:

"Doctor, that accursed stuff of yours has vile effects, sometimes!"

"Zat ees ze exception, *monsieur*."

"The exception! Well, I hope so, for if that be paradise, then I prefer hell!" he cried, angrily.

Dr. LeBaron made no reply.

"*Garçon*," continued Arnold, "bring me those letters, and then order the carriage."

I spared Kenneth the performance of the first duty, and he left the room.

Arnold, even with us, continued to be irritable and impatient, to the verge of rudeness, and I trembled to think what trials might be in store for Kenneth. Being anxious to reach our apartments before Kenneth and Arnold should return to theirs, I proposed to Smith that we start off without delay. In a few minutes our carriage was announced.

As we were about to leave the room, Kenneth re-entered. In passing me he managed to slip into my hand a scrap of paper which, upon examining it in the hall-way, I found to contain a few penciled words begging us, without fail, to station ourselves at the inner door of Arnold's room.

I hastened to obey, but my heart sank within me at the thought that, after all, the god of luck had protected his devotee!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ASSASSIN'S WEED.

On reaching the street we found that the storm had ceased. From rifts in the clouds overhead a few stars gazed indifferently upon the wet earth, while from trees and awnings hesitating drops of rain, in measured time, slowly pattered upon the pavement beneath. We entered our carriage and hastened home as fast as our horses could take us.

Smith agreed with me that nothing remained but to examine the walls of the room which Arnold had occupied at "The Belmont." Such a search, we felt sure, must furnish important evidence of his crime.

While the display which we had witnessed was sufficiently convincing to us, it lacked that definite character which the law would demand. To a jury, such a pantomime might be explained in any one of a dozen different ways, and an effort to convict a man of murder on

nothing more tangible than an account of the silent scene which had passed that evening, would, as we viewed the matter, result in inevitable failure.

This conclusion we determined to communicate to Kenneth on the following morning, when we would all try to decide upon some plan for future action. It would be best, we thought, for Kenneth to quietly sever his connection with Arnold, and, while providing for some method of keeping track of the latter, return with us to New York for the purpose of inspecting that now mysterious chamber. From that point the case would demand some new departure.

"What most puzzled me," said Smith, "was to know how that French doctor of yours managed to give me an innocent dose out of the same box from which he took Benedict's. I watched him closely, and it was a straight game."

"We must ask him," said I.

"Not necessary," replied Smith. "I had it explained while Benedict was asleep."

"Well?"

"Zare ees no *difficulté!* Von half ze box

contain ze Haschisch, an' ze ozza ze licorice extract. Ze box come not from ze *pharmacie* —I prepare eet in my own *laboratoire*. My own sairvant vait on ze door zis evening."

Though in no laughing mood, I could not restrain myself on hearing Smith's clever imitation.

"And now," added Smith, "when it comes to novel experiment, I am willing to admit that 'the French lead the world!'"

After reaching our own room we had not long to wait before Kenneth and Arnold arrived. We listened in the hall-way until we heard them coming up the stairs, and then, in slippered feet, we made our way into Kenneth's room, and to the door of the room adjoining. A pencil of light which flashed through the key-hole told the moment at which Kenneth turned up the gas. We could hear everything that was said, and, in true detective style, by taking observations through the key-hole, we could see much of that which passed.

As he threw his cloak upon the bed, Arnold turned abruptly to Kenneth and said:

"*Garçon*, how long have we been away from here?"

"Six hour, *m'sieur*," replied Kenneth.

"Six hours!" repeated Arnold. "It seems like six thousand years!"

"Six hour, *m'sieur*," repeated Kenneth.

"You saw all that I did while under the influence of that infernal drug?"

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"How long did I sleep?"

"Not long, *m'sieur*. Few minute."

"What did those other men think of the way in which I acted?"

"*Je ne sais pas* — I know not, *m'sieur*. Zey say nozzing."

"Not a word? Make sure!"

"I did not hear a vord, *m'sieur*."

"Then what did *you* think? Tell me that!"

"I sink nozzing, *m'sieur* — I sink nozzing."

"You think 'nozzing,' eh? — you think 'nozzing'" repeated Arnold, slowly, as he nervously drew off his remaining glove and tossed it upon the bed.

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"Well, that may be," said Arnold, thoughtfully. Then turning again to Kenneth, he said: "I shall not need your services any longer, and you may go in the morning. Do you understand?"

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"I shall leave Paris to-morrow, but I shall pack my own trunks, without your help. Do you hear?"

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"But now I want you to tell me what I did up there."

"*M'sieur* spik not a vord."

"I haven't asked you what I *didn't do*," said Arnold, becoming angry; "it's what I *did*, that I am after!"

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"Then tell me, quickly, or I'll dig the words from your throat!"

"*M'sieur* say nozzing," repeated Kenneth, quietly.

Had Kenneth, by his words and manner, designed to irritate the man, he could not have pursued a better course, for Arnold was now almost beside himself with rage. But at this moment a new thought struck him.

"See here!" he exclaimed. "You go through with it! I want to see you do precisely what I did, and don't you vary so much as a hair's-breadth! Do you understand?"

"*Oui, m'sieur.*"

"Begin there!" commanded Arnold.

Kenneth quickly obeyed. His position to this time had been very near our door, but now he rapidly made his way to the point which Arnold had indicated, on the farther side of their room, while the latter, supporting himself against the foot of his bed and watching Kenneth's slightest motion, now stood between him and our door.

Accompanying his every action with a word, Kenneth began.

"Ven ze rain beat on ze vindow, *m'sieur* leave hees chair an' go still like a cat ——"

Kenneth paused.

"Yes!" whispered Arnold.

"An' he do like he open ze door ——"

"For God's sake, go on!" cried Arnold.

"Zen he creep like he feel by ze vall in ze dark," said Kenneth, slowly making his way in our direction.

"Yes, yes — go on!" repeated Arnold, becoming more and more excited.

"Zen he pass anozza door, an' take ze knife from ze table, an' turn an' pass anozza door — zis time not so easy ——"

"Yes, yes!" hissed Arnold, now supporting

himself by one hand resting on the bed, while he crouched like a tiger ready to spring upon its prey.

"An' zen," continued Kenneth, stooping beside a chair which was near our door, and suiting his action to his words, "he hold hees *mouchoir* so — an' so — an' so ——"

"Yes, yes!" hissed Arnold again, between his clenched teeth.

"And then," shouted Kenneth, springing to his feet, "you cut the throat of Austin Hardy, and stole his diamonds!"

"*Ah! Who are you?*"

"I am his brother!" cried Kenneth, raising his hand high in air.

"Then you too!" shrieked Arnold, drawing a knife from his bosom and springing toward Kenneth.

But at this instant I threw wide the door, while Smith sprang into the room, confronted him with a drawn revolver, and shouted:

"Drop that knife! Quick, or I fire!"

There was little need to give this command — the blade fell from his trembling fingers and stuck upright in the floor, while he stood transfixed, white with rage and terror.

At first he stared at us as though bewildered. Then, as he looked from one to another, a change in the expression of his face told that he realized all. He glanced behind him — there was no avenue of escape in that direction.

"Benedict, your game is up — you are a prisoner," calmly said Smith.

"Never!" he cried.

Swinging about, as quick as thought, he snatched a razor from a small toilet-case near at hand. Dropping his head toward one shoulder he drew the keen blade across the opposite side of his neck, and a crimson stream shot upward to the ceiling as he sank lifeless to the floor.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS CHAMBER.

THE White Star steamship which left Liverpool ten days from that eventful night carried among its passengers Kenneth, Smith and myself.

We had remained in Paris only long enough to satisfy the demands of the law in the inquest and examination which followed the suicide in the *Avenue Marceau*, and long enough, also, to satisfy ourselves that it would be useless to wait for the slow formalities of that same law in order to recover the lost diamonds, which investigation revealed to have been in Arnold's possession.

The affair became the sensation of the day. The papers were full of it, and all Paris was discussing it before another night. Arnold was duly execrated, while our course was approved and applauded.

Kenneth, when his clever piece of acting became fully known, was the hero of the hour.

Dr. LeBaron, also, received his full share of credit. His theory had proved a practical success. His colleagues gave a banquet in his honor at the *Cercle Franco-Americain*, one week from the night on which our decoy dinner had occurred. We were all included in the invitations, and all responded, save Smith, who, for some unexplained reason, could not be induced to attend.

Dr. LeBaron, in a very graceful speech, insisted upon my sharing the honors with him. But in the reply which I was compelled to make, I disclaimed all credit, since, had it not been for his own suggestion, published in the *Journal de Médecine*, it would never have occurred to me to follow a suspected criminal across the Atlantic for the purpose of dosing him with Haschisch. Or, had I done so, failure only would have followed but for Dr. LeBaron's ready and efficient aid.

The greater part of our time, however, had been devoted to far more important matters. The examination of Arnold's effects, made under process of law by the *Commissaire de*

Police of the sixteenth *arrondissement*, revealed, among other things, a silver box containing a quantity of diamonds — some cut and some uncut — which, with the exception of a few that were missing, corresponded to the schedule obtained from the New York custom-house, and so widely published at the time of the robbery. For safe-keeping this box had been deposited at his banker's.

The schedule was considered to sufficiently identify the property, but Kenneth soon learned that in order to recover its possession he would be compelled to take out letters of administration, which, in turn, would require his procuring the necessary papers from America, and involve a delay of many weeks, if not of months.

Then it was that we all agreed that it would be best to set out for home at once, and Kenneth, after procuring the necessary papers in New York, could return to Paris to complete the business at a later date. Meanwhile his interests would be carefully guarded by the attorney whom he had engaged, and by the American Consul, to whom we were indebted for much valuable assistance.

But there was another matter to which we had given the earliest attention. We took especial pains to obtain certified copies of all records necessary to establish Gordon Wright's innocence, and thus, on our arrival, to procure his early discharge from prison.

These papers were all put into Smith's possession, for it was arranged that, so soon as we reached New York, Kenneth and I should proceed at once to "The Belmont" for the purpose of examining the walls of that room, which, we felt confident, would result in some new revelation. Although this was not absolutely necessary, yet, having accomplished so much, we took pride in obtaining the last link of evidence with which to complete the chain. As we started on our errand, Smith was to hasten to Mr. Tremaine, and, assisted by him, procure from the judge, the prosecuting attorney, and the foreman of the jury, a petition to the Governor praying for Gordon's release, on the grounds of their conviction that his innocence had been fully established. This, the Consul informed us, would constitute the necessary proceedings in such a case. Mr. Tremaine and Smith would carry the petition to Albany, and

we hoped that in two days, at the most, they would rejoin us in New York, when we would all proceed to Sing Sing and bring Gordon back in triumph.

The rolling ship, with its fourteen knots an hour, could not keep pace with our ardent desires. The sea voyage was of great benefit, however, in restoring Kenneth to health and vigor after his long and close confinement in his capacity as *valet de chambre*, and the color returned to his cheeks, while the slight hitch in his gait was now almost imperceptible. It was during this voyage, also, that I gathered from him an account of his adventures at Nice and at Monte Carlo.

Thus we passed eight quiet uneventful days, which seemed to merge into each other with only a shadow between.

The moment that we touched the wharf in New York Kenneth and I, according to previous arrangement, parted from Smith, who took a carriage and sped off down-town, while we started for "The Belmont."

A brief cable message which Kenneth had sent the morning following the tragedy in the *Avenue Marceau*, had informed his mother and

the others of what had occurred, while they learned many of the particulars from the press-dispatches which the New York papers contained at the time. Three days before we left Paris Kenneth had also posted a letter, on the chance of its catching an earlier boat than ours, giving his mother the date of our expected landing in New York. This letter, it seemed, had been received two days before our arrival, and therefore she was fully prepared for our coming.

Although the scenes through which Kenneth had passed revived sad memories in Mrs. Hardy's mind, yet this could not lessen her joy at his safe return, or her sense of relief over Gordon Wright's vindication. Her anxiety was great for the latter's early release, in order that she might at once express to him her sense of deep regret that she had ever doubted his innocence.

Helene Evarts, in greeting Kenneth, was deeply affected, and displayed more emotion than her wont. Trembling she grasped his hand and gave him welcome, but her feelings evidently passed beyond her control, for, woman-like, she turned quickly to Madge,

threw her arms about her neck, and smiling through her tears, she cried:

"O, Madge, I am so glad that Gordon is coming back!"

As for Madge, she was almost beside herself with delight at the prospect of Gordon's early release, and was impatient that his cell door should be thrown open at once.

Kenneth assured her that the necessary steps were already being taken, and that Mr. Tremaine and Smith might at that very moment be on their way to Albany bearing a petition praying for the Governor's pardon.

"Pardon?" cried Madge. "He needs no pardon — he is innocent!"

"Very true, Madge; but the law demands it. There is no way in which a man can be discharged from prison, prior to the expiration of his sentence, except by the Governor's pardon."

"Not even when he is innocent? When he never committed a crime any more than the Governor himself?"

"Not even in such a case!"

"Well, it's a shame!" exclaimed Madge, as she turned away with a look that spoke volumes of indignation.

Dora Macy gave both Kenneth and myself a cordial greeting. As I related the incidents of our strange adventure, in answer to her inquiries, she showed a keen appreciation of every fact, and I soon discovered a new and interesting side to her nature.

Kenneth and I were detained so long in answering questions and recounting the main incidents of our trip, that it was almost dinner-time before we had a chance to change our traveling-suits for more comfortable attire, and thus our proposed search was delayed several hours.

When evening came, however, we left the others, promising to return and report whatever our researches might reveal. It so happened that the room in question was unoccupied, and after obtaining the key from the office Kenneth conducted me to it.

We began by examining the wall, back of where the bed had stood. We sounded it carefully, and ran our hands over every inch of space, but with no result. Whatever there was to be found we knew must be near the floor, for Arnold, in his pantomime, had knelt at his work. Nothing was discovered, however, high or low.

"It must be in some other part of the room," said Kenneth. "I wonder if this carpet has been taken up since it happened?"

"What has that to do with it?" I asked.

"If it has not, then we should be able to find some grains of plaster under its edge. I don't believe it would all have disappeared."

Acting on this suggestion, all furniture was moved away from the wall, every gas-jet was lighted and turned to its full height, and the search was renewed. A corner of the carpet was started, tacks were pulled, and the edge raised as rapidly as possible. Then we carefully examined the floor along the base of the wall. Finally I knelt at a spot where the wardrobe had stood.

"This dust appears to be different from the rest," I said, rubbing my finger over some gritty grains on the floor.

Kenneth was at my side in an instant, and without stopping to confirm my observation regarding the nature of the dust, he began making pressure against the wall in a line directly over the spot indicated.

At a point a few inches above the base-board the paper suddenly gave way, and his fingers

penetrated what proved to be a hole in the plastering. I noticed that at this place a narrow strip of wall-paper, similar in pattern to that which lined the entire room, had been carefully pasted over the original breadth.

Slight effort on Kenneth's part served to enlarge the opening which he had made, sufficiently to admit his hand, which he inserted, and reached toward the floor. Suddenly he drew back with that instinctive recoil which makes one shrink on touching any soft object in dark and unfamiliar recesses.

But, recovering himself instantly, he reached again and brought forth a handful of cotton-wicking, saturated with some kind of oil, which he handed to me.

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"It means," said I, "that that man was master of all the fine-arts of his profession. If the paper with which he concealed the mouth of that hole had not so completely shut off the air from access to this cotton, there would have been fire between those walls long ago, and this house, now, probably, would be in ashes."

"What, do you suppose, could have been his object in that?"

"The only explanation which occurs to me is that, when he left, he wished thereby to destroy the spot that he had used as a temporary hiding-place for the diamonds and other articles of which he robbed your brother that night."

"And he would have set fire to the house in accomplishing his object?"

"Certainly! What should he care?"

"True enough!" said Kenneth. "It must be that you are right!"

"But now tell me," said I, "where on earth the fellow managed to get that extra piece of wall-paper?"

"O, there is nothing remarkable about that!" exclaimed Kenneth, as he again inserted his hand into the cavity and explored. "The paper in this room is not of an uncommon pattern, and, as he remained in the city almost a week after that dreadful night, he had ample time in which to obtain a sample."

As a result of his second exploration Kenneth secured nothing, but he felt sure that there was some object just beyond his reach, for occasionally the tips of his fingers would touch it.

With the aid of a knife the hole was still further enlarged, and by inserting his arm Kenneth succeeded in producing from its depths a small memorandum-book.

We seated ourselves side by side on the edge of the bed, beneath the streaming gas-light, and examined it. The opening pages of the book contained, in his brother's writing, a number of figures and accounts which would convey no intelligence save to the one who had made them. But on turning to the back of the book, we found the pages to be filled with carefully-prepared notes, all relating to a single subject. Dates and incidents belonging to the matter were set down with as great accuracy and attention to detail as though the writer had anticipated that it might some day become the object of official investigation by a court of justice.

The account began by giving the name of a certain man who had died in the writer's arms. Before breathing his last the dying man had made a confession, which was there carefully detailed.

It related that he, together with one Philip Arnold, had entered into a conspiracy — after-

wards successfully carried out — to rob the estate of a man, recently deceased, of valuable negotiable papers. It described the spot where this man's portion was secreted, and it gave the name of the child to whom the property rightfully belonged. It also described a peculiar ring, set with a mottled blue stone, by means of which, when found, Philip Arnold could be identified. And the writer received from the hands of the dying man a counterpart to this ring, to aid him in his search. This ended the confession.

Then followed, in closely-written hand, a detailed account of a conversation which the writer had had with the Philip Arnold before described, on a certain night in the month of November preceding.

On the last written page there was a transcribed copy of a formal statement, made by Philip Arnold, revealing the whereabouts of that portion of the stolen property which he had secreted.

There it ended, and for the first time Kenneth and I understood — what before had been so inexplicable — why it was that Philip Arnold had added the crime of murder to that of robbery.

Kenneth again knelt upon the floor and swept his hand from side to side in the cavity between the walls. In addition to some old pocket-worn letters, which had belonged to his brother, he brought forth an object which he showed me in triumph — it was a bottle, without cork or label, but having raised letters in its side indicating that it had come from a certain druggist's in Hoboken.

Kenneth searched again. The space was empty.

Well satisfied with what we had accomplished, we turned off the gas, locked the door, and started for the parlor, there to report our discoveries.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"WE KNEW THAT THEY WERE HAPPY."

At the foot of the stairs, much to our astonishment, we met Smith, who, directed by others, had started in search of us. In answer to our exclamations of surprise, he said that he had come with an important communication to make to Kenneth and myself.

We at once repaired to my room with Smith, anxious to learn what could have brought him to the "The Belmont" at a time when we supposed that he was well on his way to Albany.

"First, by way of breaking it to you gently," said Smith, "I want to know whether you fellows have seen the *Evening Post?*"

No, we had not.

"You must have been shut up in that room for a deuced long time!"

Yes — well — what of it?

"Look at that!" said he, handing me a paper having a paragraph marked in blue pencil.

I read aloud:

"PARIS, JUNE 29th. Further search among the effects of the man who committed suicide under such extraordinary circumstances, in the *Avenue Marceau*, on the 11th inst., has brought to light a package containing $15,000 in new fifty-dollar bills of the Manufacturers' National Bank, of New York, Nos. 2495 to 2594, series A, B and C. Inquiries will be made for an owner, as it is supposed that they were stolen."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Kenneth. "Did that man commit all the crimes of the year?"

"It looks very much like it," I remarked.

"But what glorious news this will be for Gordon!" he added. "Now he is wholly redeemed!"

"But, Smith," I asked, "is it for this that you have returned? What about the pardon?"

"Well," replied Smith, with aggravating deliberation, "you remember the night that you fellows went to the doctors' banquet in Paris?"

"Yes," I replied, wondering why he had to begin back there in order to answer my question.

"Well, I had all the important documents in my possession, didn't I?"

"Yes, — go on!"

"Well," said he, ceasing his interrogatories, "those documents got to New York two days ago, and Mr. Tremaine has put in the time to pretty good advantage, for when I found him he had just returned from Albany."

"Yes, — and you have the pardon?"

"Well, Mr. Tremaine brought with him a paper having the Governor's name in one corner, and a great big seal in the other. Armed with this, it didn't take us long to run up to Sing Sing and back, and I have had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Gordon Wright."

"What! You have already seen Gordon?"

"Well, yes, I have seen him. He is somewhat bleached out, and he wears his hair shorter than the prevailing style, but otherwise he is in good repair."

"Where is he? Tell us that!"

"When I last saw him he was reading the foreign news in a copy of the *Evening Post*, and he says that the description of that money sounds very familiar."

"Smith," I cried, "have mercy upon us, and relieve our suspense! Where is Gordon Wright?"

"Up stairs with Mr. Howard, waiting for you fellows to introduce him to that girl of his."

At this announcement we all sprang to our feet, and in a few words it was arranged that Kenneth should go at once to his mother's room and ask her to prepare Madge for Gordon's coming, while Smith and I would make it our duty to conduct the latter to the apartments below.

A few moments later as Smith and I, accompanied by Gordon, approached the parlor door, Mrs. Hardy was just entering upon the performance of the task which had been assigned to her. It proved to be a brief one. Approaching Madge, who was seated with Dora and Helene, Mrs. Hardy quietly said:

"I have some good news for you, Madge."

Madge turned, looked at Mrs. Hardy an instant, and then sprang to her feet.

"Where is he? Tell me!" she cried.

Suddenly Gordon made his way through the

half-open door, and in an instant the young lovers were clasped in each other's arms.

There we left them for awhile. But some time later, when we were all gathered again in the parlor, we showered congratulations upon Gordon and the happy girl at his side, whose unshaken love and faith had inspired the effort which resulted in his vindication.

Smith, also, came in for his share of applause for the very clever manner in which he had outwitted his brother detectives in bringing about this early union.

When the excitement attending these greetings had somewhat subsided, all of them demanded to know the result of the recent search in which Kenneth and I had been engaged. They listened to our account with earnest attention, broken only by occasional exclamations of surprise.

After describing the secret hiding-place which we had discovered, Kenneth told the curious story of the memorandum-book. Then we all left our seats and gathered closely about him to examine the book itself.

Thus we read the story which it told. As he slowly turned its pages, Kenneth, addressing himself to his mother, said:

"After I have finished the business which calls me to Paris I shall proceed directly to Cape Town."

"O, my son! Why is that necessary?" she exclaimed.

"My duty is clear," said he, turning another page of the book which he held in his hand. "I shall carry out the work which, evidently, my brother began."

"O, no, Kenneth! You will be needed at home — there are others who can attend to that! You will surely return to me?" she pleaded."

"O, mother, you would not ask it if you knew how anxious I am to keep doing — to keep going — to forget ——"

At this instant Helene, unnoticed by anyone save Dora, at whose side she had stood, quietly left the room.

But Kenneth had already checked himself. In his emotion he had failed, for a moment, to realize that he was not alone with his mother, and that same impulsive spirit of his which had precipitated trouble many times, was about to do so again.

Hastily he closed the book, and, with the

exception of Dora, the little group left his side. She, unobserved, lingered long enough to whisper a few words in his ear. Kenneth started, and in a moment he arose and left the room.

Although this quiet scene had passed so quickly as to be almost unnoted, yet it was impossible that those who remained should not be aware that something out of the usual order had occurred, and there followed one of those awkward pauses which such an incident always creates. This, however, lasted but a moment, for, with ready tact, Dora Macy quickly took up the conversation where it had halted, and skillfully led it back to our experiences in Paris. But lest reference to scenes in which Kenneth had been an actor might make his absence from the room the more noticeable, she dwelt upon the subject only long enough to make it an introduction to other topics.

As Dora spoke, her face, in its animation, gained a new charm. To me it seemed but a short time before Kenneth and Helene returned, when the conversation reverted to that topic which was uppermost in all our minds. After it had been discussed again and

yet again, for the last time, we parted for the night.

When alone in my room, as I reflected upon the events of the evening, the impression grew upon me that, unknown to anyone except those immediately concerned, a quiet drama had been enacted in our midst — one whose story, probably, would never be told. Of its exact nature I was ignorant, although I inferred that it must have been agreeable, for I was sure that I had never seen faces more radiant with happiness than were those of Kenneth and Helene.

On the afternoon of the following day I was greeted by a fresh surprise. The weeks which had passed had been so full of excitement, not unmixed with adventure and romance, that it might reasonably have been expected that the scenes of the previous day had marked the end. But I now learned that no such season of quietude was at hand. It was given Mrs. Hardy to inform me that, early in September, "The Belmont" would become the scene of a double wedding. It was to be, she explained, what is called a "quiet affair," attended only by the members of the family, by myself, as

she hoped, and by Madge's father, who by that time would have returned from his mission abroad.

Although this arrangement presented, no doubt, a very pleasing prospect to those who were personally concerned, yet I knew well enough that the preparations for such an event, and the presence of the principal actors in the house, would render it difficult for one in my condition to find congenial company. Therefore, since Smith had already announced that he would shortly leave us in order to seek some cool retreat for his usual summer's vacation, I resolved to go with him and have a "glorious time," promising, of course, to return in season for the wedding.

Having suffered confinement for so long I gladly embraced this opportunity to escape from the close-walled city, and as soon as our preparations were complete Smith and I started for the West, to spend our vacation among the lakes and woods of Wisconsin.

. . . .

At "The Belmont" the summer passed quietly. Upon my return I found that Kenneth had been occupied in procuring the papers

necessary to aid him in obtaining possession of the diamonds. Immediately after the wedding, which was to take place a week from the day of my arrival, he and his bride were to start for Paris, from which place they would proceed directly to Cape Town, there to find, if possible, the child whom his brother had befriended, as well as to attend to the final details of the settlement of the latter's estate.

When Kenneth, jokingly, asked what he should bring me from Paris, I told him, seriously, that above all things else I desired to possess the two curious rings which Arnold had been accustomed to wear, and I gave him commission, *carte blanche*, to procure them for me if they could be found among his effects. To this request he promised to give careful attention.

Gordon had been promptly reinstated in his former position, and the hearty sympathy which he received from all must, in some measure, have atoned for the trials through which he had passed. At the same time that Kenneth and Helene sailed for Paris, he and Madge were to start up the Hudson for their

new home — the gift of Madge's father — in one of New York's most delightful suburbs.

As previously determined, the wedding was to be attended with little ceremony. Dora was to act as a bridesmaid to Helene, while I was to support Kenneth. Gordon and Madge had no difficulty in finding friends eager to perform similar service for them.

The week passed quickly. The hour came, with its solemn words, its blossoms and veils, its smiles and tears, and lingering thoughts of the past shut out by bright hopes for future years.

It was late in the day when we took carriages and went to the boat with Kenneth and Helene. There, amidst the busy throng on the vessel's deck, at the last moment the last good-bye was said, and we left them.

Then from the edge of the wharf we watched the black monster which bore them down the bay, until we could scarcely distinguish it from the shadows which were fast gathering over the water.

Again we entered our carriages and were rapidly borne to another wharf, where another boat was waiting to bear Gordon and Madge

away. At the last tap of the impatient bell still another good-bye was said, and from the shore we watched their white steamer as it carefully felt its way among the craft which lined the water's edge, until, in mid-stream, it proudly turned its head against the current, and soon it too was lost in deepening shadows. Then back through the narrow streets our carriage bore us home.

As we entered the lonesome rooms and missed the familiar faces of those who were wont to greet us there, we had little to say. But we knew that they were happy.

. . . .

It seems that on the night of our return from Paris, when Kenneth left the parlor so suddenly, he went directly to his mother's room. There in the dim light he found Helene. She had thrown herself on a lounge, and, with her face buried in the cushion, was sobbing like a child. For an instant Kenneth paused. Then rushing to her he knelt at her side, and seizing her hand he cried:

"Helene, can you forgive me?"

For answer she only threw her arms about his neck and sobbed afresh — but her tears were tears of joy.

Dora told me this soon after we were married. How she learned it I never asked, but I half suspect that it came to her by that power of divination which all women possess.

Smith is still a bachelor.

THE END.